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EUROPE WAITS ON BRITAIN

BY SIR ARTHUR WILLERT

MR. EDEN told the House of Commons before it rose last month that the British Government still regards the "collective organization of peace" as the most essential of the problems which the Powers must tackle. He said that there were certain principles in the Covenant of the League of Nations which must be maintained. The most important of those principles was "the prevention of war," a process which included a number of elements such as the "machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes, the machinery for the adjustment of grievances, the creation of a deterrent to war, and the establishment of an international agreement for the reduction and limitation of armaments." Germany and Italy by accepting the invitation to the Five-Power Conference and by participating in the preliminary negotiations have agreed to discuss the collective organization of peace in Europe, or, to put it the other way round, methods of preventing war.

That is something to the good. A few months ago it looked as if the initiative had definitely passed to the dictatorships and to the diplomacy of ruthless individualism which they had been glorifying and practising. Signor Mussolini over Abyssinia and Herr Hitler over the demilitarized zone were confronting the League of Nations as law-breakers, avowed, impenitent and unafraid. Their posture was that of pre-war power-politics at its purest. "Well, if you don't like what we are doing, come and stop us" was the challenge which it conveyed. The democratic Powers collapsed before the challenge. By calling off their sanctions against Italy they showed Signor Mussolini that he might count upon Geneva, Paris and London not to add to the difficulties of the consolidation of his conquest. Herr Hitler, after, it is said, a moment of anxiety as to whether the Locarno

Powers would accept his occupation of the demilitarized zone as tamely as they had accepted his determination a year earlier to ignore the Treaty of Versailles and have all the Army, Navy and Air Force that he wanted, learnt with relief that he could keep his troops in the zone and even re-fortify it with nothing worse to fear than verbal indignation.

Germany, encouraged by the success of her *coup*, turned to Eastern and Central Europe. She sided overtly with the Nazi Government of Danzig in its controversy with the League of Nations. She sent her chief economic authority, Dr. Schacht, upon a tour of the Balkan and Danubian States in order to make propaganda and collect trade, a mission which Dr. Schacht's ability and the growing prestige of his country enabled him to fulfil with considerable success. She brought her quarrel with Austria to a close on terms highly satisfactory to herself. Her Press and her public men proclaimed that the Austro-German agreement concluded in July aimed at the increase of German power in the valley of the Danube, and Signor Mussolini, in spite of the fact that the main motive of his European policy had so far been to minimise German influence in Austria and the Danubian basin, blessed the agreement as a "notable step forward on the road to the reconstruction of Europe and of the Danubian countries."

There were other signs that the dictatorships were tending to come together. During the winter Germany had watched Italy's Abyssinian venture with sympathy. Her exports to Italy of such things as pig-iron, heavy manufactures and chemicals increased considerably, and the trucks that bore them were sometimes decorated by exhortations to Italy to stand fast. Italy modified her embargo upon exports, notably of hemp, in favour of Germany. In June two Italo-German conventions were signed, one for the benefit of trade between the two countries, the other for the improvement of air travel between them and for the exchange of certain privileges.

It remains to be seen whether this *rapprochement* between the Central Powers is as solid as it seems to be ; but in the meantime it has obviously increased the tendency of Europe to align itself in two camps, armed to the teeth, bristling with suspicion and professing provocatively conflicting political creeds. The

Spanish tragedy and its reactions upon the international situation have shown how dangerously the issue of Fascism and Democracy is stirring under the crust of our old world civilization. But the very danger of the situation may in the end prove to have conjured up its cure. It has, as we have seen, already stimulated the democracies into an effort to recover the initiative, to make, as Mr. Eden has well said, "an era of opportunity out of an era of difficulty." And they have started in the right direction.

But to start in the right direction is not necessarily to reach the journey's end. It need not even imply adequate knowledge of the route. Many things have contributed to the failure of all the efforts there have been at and since the Peace Conference to organize the affairs of Europe. The United States hit the League of Nations hard when she deserted it and the Treaty of Versailles. France has sundry sins of commission and omission at her door. Germany and Italy must take their share of the blame. So also must Great Britain. The fact that she has always been commendably in the lead in every attempt to better the European system and to solve its recurrent crises does not absolve her from a considerable responsibility for the present crisis. Her leadership has often been marred by timidity and by an apparent inability to think things through. Though always professing her loyalty to the League of Nations and to the "collective organization of peace" she has never really lived up to her creed. "At last after ten years England has seen the light," cried M. Herriot after Sir Samuel Hoare's speech before the League of Nations at Geneva last September. M. Herriot's exclamation was elicited by Sir Samuel's much-quoted announcement that Great Britain stood for "the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety and particularly for steady collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression." M. Herriot, like millions of others, thought that this meant that we had at last seen that the best way in which peace can be guaranteed in Europe was for us to join with those who are prepared to protect it wherever it may be unjustly or unlawfully threatened, instead of being inclined, as we had always been, to limit our full responsibilities under the Covenant to the West of Europe.

There is no need to recapitulate the manner in which those

hopes were blasted. The Hoare-Laval proposal and the failure of sanctions to do anything tangible except to provide Signor Mussolini with useful material for patriotic propaganda have hit the prestige of British diplomacy even harder than they have hit the authority of the League of Nations. The writer was in Canada and the United States soon after the episode of the Hoare-Laval proposals. It was a humiliating experience. One was made to feel that we had been guilty of treachery to the decent organization of international affairs as naïve as it was cynical—cynical because it was a betrayal of the League of Nations just after the Government had been returned to power on a League of Nations platform ; naïve because of the incredible carelessness which it showed of what British public opinion would or would not accept. Nor did Sir Samuel Hoare monopolize the criticism. It was noted that his colleagues had been ready to support his proposal until they realized the devastating volume of the popular opposition which it had aroused. Also the frankness of his apologia in the House of Commons was compared favourably with the postures in which the incident left his colleagues.

Some months later I was in Europe after the Italians had entered Addis Ababa and when it was clear that sanctions were going to be called off. Again one felt that the reputation of British diplomacy for clear-thinking and dependability had been hard hit. History will undoubtedly saddle France with a large share of responsibility for the fiasco. In the preparatory stages of the Abyssinian campaign she seems almost to have encouraged Signor Mussolini to go ahead with the aggression. Great Britain sinned only by failing to warn Signor Mussolini to what lengths she was ultimately prepared to carry her obvious disapproval of his project. But her omission gravely compromised the authority of the League of Nations, for no adequate play was given to the deterrent effect of sanctions, which ought to be one of the most valuable assets of a properly organized collective security system. For the feebleness of sanctions, when they were invoked, both countries must accept responsibility. But, in this instance, as is so often the case in international relations, what is apt to matter is not so much what the facts really are as what other people think they are ; and abroad the lion's share

of the responsibility for the humiliation of the democracies is laid at our door.

Our behaviour in the Abyssinian affair has moreover stirred up distrust in regard to our whole European policy. That distrust has been heightened by such things as Mr. Neville Chamberlain's speech in June before the 1900 Club, in which he stated that, in his judgment, the collective system had been tried out and had failed and that therefore it might be wise "to explore the possibilities of localising the danger-spots of the world and trying to find a more practical method of securing peace by means of regional arrangements which could be approved by the League, but which should be guaranteed only by those nations whose interests were vitally concerned with those danger-zones." Mr. Chamberlain was afterwards at pains to explain that this speech was a purely personal indiscretion. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer is regarded abroad as the dominating member of the Cabinet and as Mr. Baldwin's heir presumptive. For him to hold such language meant to the foreigner only one thing, namely, that opposition to Mr. Eden's League of Nations policy had been strengthened by the failure of sanctions and that the Cabinet was deeply divided in regard to the future of our relations with Europe.

The satisfaction and sympathy with which the frightened countries are watching his efforts to bring the Locarno Powers together as a preliminary to wider negotiations and an examination of the problem of League of Nations reform is thus diluted by anxiety as to how far Mr. Eden is master of British policy. Will he, like Lord Castlereagh, when representing England in the peace negotiations after the Napoleonic War, be able to bring a doubtful Cabinet to his own views or will the views put out by Mr. Chamberlain prevail? Mr. Chamberlain advocated virtually the same policy as that which Sir John Simon was unsuccessfully trying to conduct when he was replaced at the Foreign Office last year by Sir Samuel Hoare. The key to Sir John Simon's policy was the formation under the misleading title of collective security of a number of local regional security Pacts in which countries should group together to defend the peace in their own parts of the Continent, Great Britain limiting her responsibilities to the Rhine frontier. Regional security

Pacts have at one time or another been officially blessed by various countries, including France. But it may be doubted whether this means much more than a resigned recognition that in politics as in other things a small slice of bread is better than no loaf at all, that to have England interested in the frontiers of the Rhine is at any rate better than nothing.

The principal war-fears which prevent the Continent from settling down are French fear of Germany, German fear of Russia, Russian fear of Germany and a general fear that, by reaching out ruthlessly down the Danube, Germany might in one way or another bring on a first-class war. Behind them are the fears of the smaller fish in those troubled waters. Few of these fears would be exorcised by Regional Security Pacts. If Germany were really to plan an attack on Russia or Russia an attack on Germany, it may be taken for granted that no local Eastern security arrangement would prevent war. Moreover, the pact would in all probability have been weakened and perhaps destroyed by preliminary political preparations. And it would be the same in the South East. Under a regime of local security pacts the fate of the Danubian basin and the Balkans would be likely to depend far less upon their existence than upon the policies of, and the relations between, Germany and Italy and perhaps Russia. Regional Pacts would in truth seem calculated to increase rather than diminish that jockeying for position which is always one of the greatest dangers to peace at a period when countries are dissatisfied, restless and afraid. They would tend to become centres of intrigue rather than strong-points of peace. They might well prove to present a scarcely better defence of peace than the old system of countervailing alliances through which pre-war diplomacy unsuccessfully ensued security. Even the Pact of Locarno, the classical example of a regional pact, acceptable as was the respite which it secured, has not noticeably contributed to the peace of mind of Europe as a whole or of the countries that it concerns during the recent troublous years. It is difficult, indeed, to see how anything can secure that peace of mind short of an alliance for the protection of peace open to everybody and so strong that not even the most powerful of countries would dare to break it ; and of such an alliance Great Britain is regarded by most Europeans as an essential member.

Mr. Chamberlain's speech stands by no means alone as an indication that their discomfiture over Abyssinia has made members of the Government defeatist as to genuine collective security. It is frequently intimated that the sanctions upon which any such system must be based have proved themselves to be unworkable. Mr. Eden made it clear in the House of Commons on July 27th that the Government would stand by its obligations under the Pact of Locarno. He also said that "the fact that we have certain obligations in certain parts of Europe—I say this for the Government—does not mean that we disinterest ourselves today from what happens in the rest of Europe. Is there, indeed, a conflict in Europe that can be localised? If the flames are lit, will they not spread and is not therefore the peace of all Europe the concern of all Europe?" But, he added, the difficulty was that it was now quite clear that "every nation is not prepared to go to war for each nation."

In the present circumstances that is true.

The fate of Abyssinia has obviously and naturally increased the reluctance of Holland and the Scandinavian countries, warm supporters of the League of Nations though they be, to commit themselves unconditionally to a collective security system under which they would be pledged to automatic participation in armed sanctions against an illegal aggression. They must be numbered among the nations which, as Mr. Eden says, are *not* prepared to support peace, by force if necessary, wherever it may be threatened. It cannot, however, be taken for granted that this attitude is due to any real doubt as to how, other things being equal, peace could best be organized. It is much more likely that it is due to a desire on the part of the weaker neighbours of Germany and Russia to be quite sure that they would not find themselves deserted by the Great Powers in general and by England in particular after having done their share in putting sanctions into effect and having incurred the hostility of an overwhelmingly powerful neighbour. Nor need the fact that France talks of regional security agreements in her latest peace plan be taken to indicate that she would be unwilling, if we would pledge ourselves to do the same, to underwrite peace everywhere in Europe.

The Continent, in fact, recognizes the truth (sometimes

ignored in this country) that the League of Nations and any system of collective security that may go with it is just as strong or just as weak as its leading members like to make it. It recognizes, as I have already indicated, that Great Britain is, and must remain, the most important of those key-members. The forces on each side of the cleavage, which is so ominously appearing between two sets of States and principles, are so balanced as to put us in a particularly favourable position for the exercise of our influence. Our prestige as a nation is normally also so high, thanks to the admiration everywhere entertained for the way in which we have weathered the depression, that, if it can show that it has recovered its powers of judgment and consistent leadership, our diplomacy can be as influential in the affairs of Europe as ever. The Government, in other words, has but to demonstrate that it still proposes to implement Sir Samuel Hoare's Geneva speech by broadening the somewhat narrow interpretation which Great Britain has habitually placed upon her responsibilities under the coercive clauses of the Covenant in order to pull all the weight in European politics—that any of its predecessors have done.

Does "enlightened self-interest," upon which a healthy foreign policy must be based, demand such action on our part? Obviously it is to our interests to have as our neighbour a peaceful, safe-feeling Continent. Europe is still of the greatest importance to the prosperity of our trade, and a quietening of its nerves would immensely help our economic recovery. A restless Europe, on the other hand, menaces alike our security and our prosperity. As Mr. Baldwin and others have often said, another war on the Continent might well smash to pieces our old world civilization and its institutions, both political and economic. It would thus ruin us even if we could keep out of it. And we should be most unlikely to be able to keep out of it. We are now physically a part of Europe; and even the United States has been dragged unwillingly across all the breadth of the Atlantic into both the big Continental wars that there have been since she became a nation. For these and for other reasons self-interest appears to indicate that we should take the most constructive possible share in the peaceful organization of the Continent.

As nobody in authority suggests that we should attempt the impossible by trying completely to insulate ourselves, that brings us to a consideration of the rival merits, from the British point of view, of regional security and of collective security, as described, for instance, by Lord Allen of Hurtwood in *The Fortnightly* of June. Regional security would presumably mean for us a definite commitment to defend the integrity of the Rhine frontier coupled probably with an announcement that, while not disassociating ourselves entirely from questions of peace and war in the rest of Europe, we proposed to keep our freedom to judge each case on its merits. But, as we have seen, regional Pacts would not do much to help Europe to settle down, and notice that we could definitely undertake to protect peace only on the Rhine might well be taken as a hint to any Power which wanted to upset things further afield that it would in all probability not have to reckon with us, if it played its cards cleverly. That would hardly exorcize the menace of war or give us a tranquil Europe to trade in. Nor is it easy to see how regional security could fail to hurt our imperial interests. How, for instance, could the safety of our Mediterranean communications, the importance of which Admiral Richmond stressed in last number of *The Fortnightly*, be achieved, if we cowered behind the Rhine and left the peace of Central and South-Eastern Europe to look after itself?

How, on the other hand, does collective security emerge from the test of opportunism? Considerations of space permit only a brief and superficial answer to this question. Some of the objections put forward to British participation in a general system of collective security can be roughly summarized as follows :

- (1) No country can be counted upon to fight except where its direct interests are concerned.

- (2) Countries never have consented, and never will consent, to surrender their sovereignty to the extent of promising to obey the coercive clauses of the Covenant in all circumstances.

- (3) Collective security would tend to crystallize the *status quo* and thus increase the risk that the Have-not countries may explode into war.

(4) Sanctions in Europe are impossible with the United States outside the League and therefore liable to object to the curtailment of her trade which their effective application would involve.

(5) And, anyhow, the League, having failed to prevent unlawful aggression in Asia and in Africa, would be equally impotent in Europe.

(6) It is against traditional British policy to pledge ourselves in advance to interfere in outer Europe.

(7) The Dominions would object to the United Kingdom's becoming so deeply committed in Europe.

The front presented by these objections is obviously formidable ; but is it impregnable ? The question of sovereignty raised by (2) is important and difficult. But even so, the argument upon which it, like (6) is based, namely, that what has been must always be and that what has not been can never be, is not necessarily convincing in these days of radical change. As for (7), it would be surprising if the Dominions did not welcome any European policy on our part really making for the consolidation of European peace. There are various precedents for our having a more advanced European policy than the Dominions and even a special commitment which they do not share to go to war in certain circumstances (the Pact of Locarno, which no Dominion joined). (1) as already shown, is based largely upon a misapprehension of the reason why various countries have suddenly become shy of coercive collectivism. If we accepted the responsibilities of membership in a full collective system other countries would almost certainly be glad to do the same. The answer to (5) is that, in the case of both Manchuria and Abyssinia, it is quite likely that there would have been no attack had it been clear from the outset that the Powers most concerned with keeping the peace were prepared, if necessary, to compel its observance. In the case of Abyssinia, moreover, sanctions were put into force so timidly that they had no chance of influencing the course of the war. One answer to (4) is that the objection would be equally valid as against local security arrangements and any local war that those arrangements might necessitate. In point of fact, the more comprehensive and the more impressive the organization of peace in Europe

is made, the less likely would the United States be to resent interference with her trade, if coercive measures were necessary against a country that had broken her own Kellogg Pact. (3) is surely met by the Government's statement that "machinery for the adjustment of grievances must be an essential part of any European settlement." If, as is to be hoped, this statement refers to minor territorial grievances like those presented by Danzig or Memel as well as to colonies and economic facilities, then it provides an additional answer to (1) by lessening the fear that collective action may be needed to stop some local armed aggression—in which only a few countries had a direct interest.

Participation in real collective security would, of course, have its risks. But they would surely be less than the risks of an indefinite continuance of the present situation or something like it. The weaker the defence of peace, the more difficult it will be for Europe to settle down. The progressive deterioration of the international situation since the failure of the Disarmament Conference shows that. And three things would seem to be necessary if that deterioration is to be stopped. One is that the grievances of the "Have-nots" should be fairly met; the second is that the frightened countries should feel safe enough to join with us in making the machinery for the adjustment of grievances work generously; the third is that no country should be left in the slightest doubt as to the impossibility of making lawlessness pay in Europe as the Japanese and Italians have made it pay in Asia and Africa. Recent history indicates that none of those things can be achieved; unless we are prepared to support collective security with more conviction than we have so far done.

What it seems to come to is this. Europe has failed several times in the last decade both to organize peace and to protect it from aggression; and its failure has been to a considerable extent due to British distrust of new measures to meet new conditions. We are now taking the initiative in yet another effort to put things right; but that initiative is not likely to be effective unless we realize that, as Mr. Winston Churchill said not long ago, "You cannot take a lead in great causes as a half-timer."

CIVIL WAR IN SPAIN

BY LAWRENCE A. FERNSWORTH

HERE in Spain Civil War rages. The iron hand of "Fascism" has struck, and the clenched fist of revolutionary masses has answered. The conflict is pitiless, and as this is being written the fate of Spain hangs in the balance—perhaps also the course of history in Europe.

Shall Fascism or popular government, which may well assume one of the devious forms of communism—perhaps a combination of Marxism and Bakuninism in Spain's special case—dominate Europe in years to come? Or shall the rule of the people, and long-accepted and laboriously-won norms of human rights and of the dignity of the individual man, be swept away to make room for the doctrine of the supreme and totalitarian state owning and regimenting the bodies and souls of men? Such, according to all indications, is the issue.

Viewing the internal kaleidoscope one finds that all the reactionary and privileged, and to a great extent the conservative forces of Spain, have united under a common banner. The caste of wealth and privilege defending its interests; the military caste defending its ancient prerogatives; the Church fighting for power and place and doctrine—these are the opponents of the constituted Government. And, although there be some like Gil Robles who deny "moral responsibility," and so on, for what has occurred, their denials are met with derision by Spaniards wise in the ways of such things. That he and his kind would be among the principal beneficiaries, should victory be to the rebels, no one doubts.

"The Army," playing its traditional and self-appointed rôle of "Saviour of Spain," has rebelled against the Government, against popular authority in which, by class education and instinct, it is incapable of believing, has declared war. Its present mission is to "save Spain from communism," as in the

past it has been to "save Spain" from the dangers of free and liberal education, from the pretensions of labour as expressed through its trade unions; from Republicanism; from "dis-memberment" through the triumph of the Catalan and other regional movements.

Unfortunately, a preponderant part of Spain was in no mood to be saved. It was remembered, perhaps, that these successive waves of salvation have all but destroyed a country rich in resources and people, which might have been great if its rulers had not been so lacking in foresight and wisdom. And so when the saviours marched forth they met angry resistance.

The Government, joining forces with revolutionary masses of various kinds, from the comparatively moderate and reasonable Socialists to the Communists and the Anarcho-Syndicalists, who believe in direct action as the most effective revolutionary argument, defeated the rebels in Barcelona and other strategic points, and is opposing them with some success elsewhere. Revolutionary history was made in Barcelona and some other places where citizens, mostly workmen, met the trained forces of the army with an attack so resolute and fierce that they were beaten within fourteen hours and their leader, General Manuel Goded, captured. This time the people were not to be cowed like sheep by a mere rattling of military sabres.

Churches and convents have been burned by the hundreds, priests, monks and nuns have been scattered, and in all too numerous cases assassinated. Amazing as it seems, hordes of others whose lives were in danger have managed successfully to run the gauntlet of roads, trails and frontiers bristling with armed guards, lorry patrols and barricades. The real power is in the hands of the revolutionary masses—particularly in Catalonia. The National Confederation of Labour, which affects anarchism, is digging in for an eventual struggle with its ally of the moment, the constitutional Government. Public utilities and industries have been seized and are being managed by revolutionary committees. Is the Kerensky role to be reserved to Azaña and his Government who sought to save democracy for Spain and so, to a certain extent, for Europe? No one can say what the morrow shall bring forth. There remains the one chance in, let us say twenty, that constitutional

and democratic Government will yet carry the day as against Fascism and proletarian revolution.

It may be interesting here to quote what was said to me by a Spanish ex-Prime Minister whose name I may not give ; not a man of the Right, but one whose moderate views had caused Left elements to view him with disfavour, and with whom I journeyed as he was escaping from Spain :

"If the rebels are successful Spain will become an appendage of Mussolini and Hitler. Fascism will have acquired three European fronts. France will be strangled. The deaths in Spain will be 300,000 at least. European history will take a new course." And he added: "A friendly gesture made by England to procure a truce before it is too late, to cause this massacre to end, might yet avert Fascism in Spain—and Communism."

But a truce was not in the cards.

Spain's civil war is merely a phase, the sanguinary one, of a revolution which has been in progress for five years and four months, or ever since the Republic was ushered in on April 14th, 1931. That event was the bloodless phase. An accumulation of succeeding events may be divided into three periods which are the direct antecedents of that which is happening. Many students of revolutionary history foresaw civil war with its consequent bloodshed as the necessary sequel of the Republic's advent. It has come, but shall one say it has necessarily come? Numerous links in the chain of circumstances which brought it about were quite accidental. Indeed, to this observer it seemed that there was always the possibility that "*el niño*"—"the child" as its enemies derisively styled the Republic—might attain its growth with scarcely more untoward incidents than the ordinary *contretemps* of childhood. That civil war has now so suddenly been precipitated is the almost accidental outcome of more recent circumstance—especially the shooting, just a week before the outbreak, of the shock police captain Castillo and the shooting in retaliation by the shock police of the Monarchist leader, Calvo Sotelo.

The first period of the revolutionary interval was the time from the declaration of the Republic in April, 1931, to the national elections of November, 1933, the period presided over by Don Manuel Azaña. One of the first acts of the Republic of this period was to clip the overgrown wings of the army by

somewhat curtailing the power of its generals and making them subordinate to the civil authority. This earned for it the ill-will of the military leaders. There were rumblings of military *coups*. One day in the summer of 1931 General Manuel Goded made a speech to his troops which everybody knew was an incitement to rebellion. Yet he was treated considerately, was merely transferred from his command, if I remember correctly. About the same time the now completely discredited Alejandro Lerroux, then leader of the Radical party (an opportunist party of the Centre), made a speech at Saragossa which was also taken as an incitement to the armed forces. A few days later there were military uprisings in Madrid and Seville, that at Madrid quickly put down, that at Seville lasting a day or two under the leadership of General Sanjurjo, who had come to "save Spain" from its Republican Masters. In France ex-King Alfonso was in agitated telephonic communication with Spain.

How Sanjurjo was beaten, captured in flight, tried and condemned to death, spared and sent to prison from which he escaped by bribery, and how finally he again became a plotter, meeting his death as he was flying from Portugal to Spain to take part in the present outbreak, is all history by now. Yet the Government, while striving to make the army amenable to the civil authority did not harass it—indeed treated it well. It took no action against well-known plotters, giving them the benefit of the doubt whenever there did not exist the most damning proof of disloyalty. And Spain is a land where it is notoriously next to impossible to prove anything, even what one has seen and heard. The facility of the Spaniard for changing the face of fact is one of the world's wonders to any other Westerner. The Republic had need of the army and sought—vainly it seems—to capture its sympathy. In the main its *fueros*, or privileges, somewhat feudal in type, were left intact. Indeed, the Azaña government set out to build up a stronger and more efficient military organization.

But it could not smother the ill-will and hatred that smouldered behind the obsequious and smiling masks of its generals. In Spain the army has traditionally been an untouchable Holy of Holies. To offend it by spoken or written word was an "insult," to show the slightest disrespect to its authority constituted

“resistance of the armed forces” or even “military rebellion,” for which any civilian might be hauled before a military tribunal, be sent to a fortress while awaiting trial, and finally be sent to a military prison for a long term of years. That the criticism of the army—the “insult”—might consist in no more than a recital of certain truths did not matter. It was a crime to tell the truth about the army if the truth did it no credit, as was often the case. Indeed, the first Azaña Government changed this situation only slightly by placing “insults” emitted by the press or by mechanical means under civil jurisdiction, leaving “insults” uttered by word of mouth under military control. It did, however, abolish the military *juntas* those camarillas by which the army dictated military policy and intervened in civilian affairs. But the very reasonable and conciliatory attitude of the Republic did not avail.

The Republic, having earned the enmity of the military, also incurred the ill-will of the Church. It dissolved the Jesuit order and seized its property. It controlled, although it did not forbid, religious funerals and burials, as well as those resplendent religious processions in the public streets for which Spain is famed. It gave Spain a divorce law which the Church could never condone, considering it a mortal blow at her authority and doctrines. It passed the religious congregations law limiting the activities of religious orders and suppressing Church schools. Apparently this law more than any of the others aroused a hostile sentiment in the land, particularly on the part of parents who felt indignant that they should not have a free choice in the matter of educating their children. This law undoubtedly contributed to the Left Government’s defeat in November, 1933. Finally, the Government passed a law nationalising church property, a law whose terms can hardly be called unreasonable since it left the Church in the fullest use of church property to the last vestment and cruet. Moreover, the State itself was forbidden from alienating church property. The theory of the law was that such property was a national patrimony, not the ordinary investment items of earned capital but the contribution of the people, of the wealthy classes and even of the State, and that as such it must be preserved to the nation. The law’s object was to prevent the property’s dispersion by private sale. The

Republic also renounced the monarchy's prerogative of nominating candidates for the bishoprics ; took the hierarchy and the clergy off the public pay roll ; forbade priests to earn a livelihood by acting as teachers. It maintained diplomatic relations with the Vatican, and the papal nuncio was the dean of the Madrid diplomatic corps, received with all honours. That is a summing-up of what the Republic did to the Church, the good and the bad ; and in this sum total lie the motives for the Church's hostility.

When in 1933 Gil Robles began to build up his Catholic party, known as *Acción Popular*, the Church formed a strong alliance with it through an organization of Catholics known as *Acción Católica*. Gil Robles himself has repeatedly given testimony that the chief reason for the existence of *Acción Popular* was to defend the Church's interests. In the campaign preceding the most recent elections Catholics were urged by their bishops and pastors to vote against the Popular Front. Let one instance be cited : The Archdiocesan Junta of *Acción Popular* for the Diocese of Tarragona, seat of the Catalan primate and cardinal, in a widely-published manifesto (see *La Vanguardia*, Barcelona, February 11 and 12, 1936, among other newspapers), warned Catholics of "the dangers of the triumph of the revolution in the forthcoming elections," and notified them that it was their "duty" to vote "the announced candidacy of order" (in Catalonia the Order Front was the coalition of Right parties), and that in so doing they would be faithful to "the desire of the Pontiff recently set forth by His Eminence Cardinal Goma." It continued :

"Abstention in these circumstances would be a desertion and a betrayal of the fatherland and a manifest disobedience to the norms which, in the present circumstances, have been outlined by the Holy See and the Spanish Episcopacy. Let all then vote as a single man, with a single ticket, for religion and the fatherland."

It is not the purpose here to pass judgment on the action of the Church in entering the political arena in what it undoubtedly considered the defence of its interests. The intention is merely to signal a fact. And, considering the purely tactical aspect of the case, it was surely the most ill-advised course the Church could have taken, since the masses, who after the first short-

lived outbreak of violence in May, 1931, had shown every disposition to be tolerant with the Church, were aroused to fury by what they considered its alliance, with the enemies of the Republic. Hence recent acts of vengeance wherever the Church had "played politics."

The Constitution established during this first period was on its face value Liberal, if Socialistic in tendency. In the meantime the Anarcho-Syndicalists wore down the Government by repeated revolutionary movements, e.g., September, 1931 in Barcelona, and the following January, still another in January, 1933, and the widespread movement of December, 1933. On the part of the Anarcho-Syndicalists who engineered them all, they were but a "tactic" intended to harry the Government, to accustom the masses to the idea of revolution, to experiment, and by a process of trial and error hit upon a course giving promise of success. There is an ironic note in the fact that, the great revolutionary moment having finally come, it has not been through a repetition of mass war against the Government but by collaboration with the Government against a common foe. Here also enters the element of accident, for there could have been no "red" collaboration with the Government if the rebellious army had not provided the "Reds" with their opportunity.

In the latter part of the Azaña biennium there was a split between the left Republicans and the Socialists, who withdrew from the coalition to remain on the sidelines in "friendly opposition." In the meantime Catalonia had been granted its autonomy and the cry went up, even on the part of sincere Republicans, that the Republic was ruining Spain by dismembering it. There ensued an abatement of Republican fervour, a time of *desanimo*. It was being said that the Government and the Cortes were divorced from public opinion and could no longer carry on.

President Alcalá Zamora, making use of Presidential prerogatives, dissolved the Cortes. This action earned for him the eternal hatred of his former Republican colleagues. They said that there was still important work for Cortes Constituyentes to do; that the dissolution was not only unnecessary but indeed a betrayal of the Republic into the hands of its enemies who, surely enough, proved to be the victors in the ensuing elections.

If it was true that there existed a divorce between the Government and public opinion, it was also true that there existed a divorce between the Republic and the President. Alcala Zamora, as an ardent Catholic, had found the religious laws repugnant and had even tried finding a way to avoid attaching his signature to them. Nor was he in sympathy with other Republican legislation or even the constitution, all of which he considered far too liberal. He has since paid the penalty by being ejected summarily from office by the Cortes which took power last February following the elections last February that once more returned Azaña to power.

By huge expenditures of money the Rights in conjunction with Don Alejandro Lerroux's Radical party won the 1933 national elections and took power in December, the governmental combination being Gil Robles' Ceda (*Confederación Española de Derechistas Autonomos*), which was a grouping of several smaller Right parties around *Acción Popular*, and the Radical party. The Ceda was supporting Lerroux on the sidelines for the moment. Of the Radical party it may be said that it was a somewhat opportunist middle contingent having little radical about it but its name. Although even in the days before the Republic it purported to be a Republican party, the Republicans soon refused to have dealings with it, and particularly with its leader, Lerroux, for reasons which are known to every student of Spanish affairs.

In the new Cortes neither the Ceda nor the Radicals had a majority but they formed the two largest *blocs*. Lerroux for the time became the Prime Minister, but he could do nothing without Gil Robles, who openly boasted of being the power behind the throne. Gil Robles announced that the trajectory of his party consisted in "supporting Lerroux [from the sidelines], collaborating with Lerroux, succeeding Lerroux." He did not find this trajectory so easy, for Lerroux was a wily politician who frequently outwitted Gil Robles. The collaboration of these two political groups was a period of time-marking, of waste and corruption, as has since been revealed by the Straperlo and the Mombela scandals. Of the Radical party it was said that its object was to protract its stay in power as long as possible, on the theory that the longer in power the more

copious the spoils. Gil Robles and other Rights and monarchists, for their part, had only one object, to keep the Cortes marking time until after December 10th, 1935, when they hoped to propose a constitutional reform by a majority vote, a thing which would have been impossible before that date by the terms of the constitution itself. The first part of the Gil Robles' "trajectory", support of Lerroux from the sidelines, was a reality until October, 1934. The second part, collaboration in the Government, precipitated the 1934 rebellion in Asturias, Catalonia and other parts of Spain. In Asturias, the Workers' Alliance and the Anarcho-Syndicalists joined forces. The real object of the armed workers, of course, equally in Catalonia and in Asturias, was first to aid the Government and then to seize it for themselves. They did not succeed, but the manoeuvre proved a valuable lesson which is now being applied in Catalonia, Madrid, and in other parts of Spain where the rebels have been beaten or held in check.

The final part of Gil Robles' "trajectory," the taking of power in succession to Lerroux, was frustrated by President Alcalá Zamora, perpetually torn between his Catholicism and his Republicanism. His anxiety to save his Republican hall-mark would not permit him to place in power as Prime Minister a man like Gil Robles who, as everyone knew, was bent upon wrecking the Republic. He therefore, last January, again dissolved the Cortes and named as Prime Minister to preside over the elections an able and intelligent man of the centre, Don Manuel Portela Valladares, who had accepted the Republic, notwithstanding distinctly conservative views. Gil Robles was furious and went about the country making violent speeches in which he threatened to "blow the President sky high . . . when we take power." The elections came, but Gil Robles did not take power and, as has been seen, the blowing of the President "sky high" was reserved to Gil Robles' opponents.

Thus ended the second period of which the chief characteristics were waste, corruption, time-marking, illegalities, the undermining of Republican institutions, the official wreaking of vengeance upon Republican personalities such as Señor Azaña who, without a shred of proof against him, but with overabundant proof in his favour, was kept long a prisoner, the

attempted annihilation of opponents, and, finally, terrible and bloody repressions. In Spain this period is now widely called the period of "the black biennium."

The elections of last February saw an overwhelming triumph of the Lefts ; with the occupation of power by Azaña there was ushered in the brief third and final period of Spain's five-year revolutionary interval. Azaña's first act was to rehabilitate the much-mutilated constitution, restore the suspended or superseded Republican laws, return to Catalonia its autonomy. Hordes of political and social offenders were released from their prisons. Peasants by the thousands were placed on the land or confirmed in their taking of it. In the meantime there began a campaign of violence on the part of the Rights. There were provocative acts in the streets, shootings and murders and, as is natural, retaliations. The army was known to be engaged in a widespread revolutionary plot. Some scattered mutinous movements were suppressed. There were in particular two generals whose names were frequently mentioned as leaders of any revolt, Manuel Goded and Francisco Franco. The Government felt it had impeded their plotting when it "exiled" them from the mainland, sending Goded to Majorca as military commander, and Franco to the Canary Islands. But Goded used his place of exile as a base for organizing the rebellion in Barcelona, while the Canaries were Franco's base for organizing the rebellion in Morocco. Although the Government was aware of the plotting, it found itself powerless for want of documentary proof and, as has been said, Spain is a land where the proving of anything is a most difficult matter. Moreover, the Government could not always be sure, for there were generals upon whom it had bestowed high honours and who up to the last moment had protested their loyalty with smiles and oaths, but whom the outbreak of hostilities found in the camps of the rebels. Yet one marvels at the lack of foresight which permitted the Government to maintain a concentration of troops, of arms and munitions in such a strategic place as Saragossa where the rebels commanded twelve regiments at the outbreak of hostilities.

July 17th saw the military uprisings in Spanish Morocco and a few scattered points in Spain. The following day there were more. On Sunday, July 19th, the uprising became general

throughout Spain, in Barcelona, in Madrid and in other places. That which has ensued is still the theme of the daily press.

In Madrid, in Barcelona and elsewhere the various proletarian organizations and parties, the Anarcho-Syndicalists more commonly called the F.A.I. (*Federación Anarquística Iberica*); the Socialists, the Communists consisting of the official or Moscow and the unofficial or Trotsky contingents; the peasants and others have formed a united front with the Government against the common enemy, the Fascists. That front will undoubtedly be maintained until the rebels are beaten or the Government falls before their onslaughts. Should the Government win, it will then have to reckon with the proletariat, who consider this their revolution, and are demanding the substance of power. Should the rebels win, the proletariat revolution may nevertheless be expected to continue, for the masses are in no mood to allow themselves to be placed once more under a military dictatorship. A most sanguinary guerilla warfare and slaughter may be looked for. And then, of course, there is the international factor, to which allusion was made in the early part of this article.

In Barcelona the Catalan government has taken upon itself the powers of a sovereign state, but it moves within the shadow of the proletariat Anti-Fascist committee that constitutes the real power, which considers the Government as but a straw dummy to approve what it has done, and which is making all its plans to impose a workers' government at the opportune moment. There are almost parallel situations in Madrid and in other parts of Spain. Should the proletariat finally prevail, the question arises which of the various kinds of proletariat rule, Socialism, Anarcho-Syndicalism, or Communism is to be imposed? The indications are that a common understanding may be reached by a process of fusion of these various social doctrines, and that what is finally evolved will not be the pure essence of any one of them. That, it is explained, is the way such things work out under revolutionary stress.

THE INDUSTRIAL RESERVE

BY JAMES MAXTON, M.P.

WHEN the Unemployment Assistance Board was brought into existence by the Unemployment Act of 1934 it was hoped and believed in many quarters that the problem of relieving the needs of the men and women who had suffered long terms of unemployment were being met in an adequate and efficient way, and that this part of the unemployment problem was being removed from the central position in party strife and controversy that it had occupied for the last fifteen years at least.

The Board was charged with the duty of laying down regulations to govern the assistance of able-bodied unemployed persons, not only for the relief of their material needs, but also for the promotion of their welfare, and of creating the necessary administrative machine to carry out this work throughout the country. It was expected that the Board would do its work well. It has as Chairman, Lord Rushcliffe, who, as Sir Henry Betterton, had had a longer experience of dealing with the unemployed at the Ministry of Labour than any other political figure in this country. He had served both as Minister and Under-Secretary, and had taken the trouble to inform himself fully on his work. He was also not devoid of human sympathies. With him were appointed four others, three men and one woman, all of whom had large experience of public work of one kind or another. One of them, Mr. Reynard, had had first-class administrative experience in Poor Law work in the Central and Western districts of Scotland, and at the time of his appointment was responsible for Poor Law administration in Glasgow, and for directing the relief of the able-bodied unemployed by the transitional payments which were the forerunner of unemployment assistance. The Board took some months in the preparation of their regulations, which, after consideration by the Cabinet, were presented to

Parliament in December, 1934, by Major Oliver Stanley who was then Minister of Labour. After discussion in Parliament they were approved and January 7th, 1935, was fixed as the date for their coming into operation.

The Parliamentary discussion was not of a prolonged or acrimonious nature. The Labour and Liberal Parties put up a critical opposition, but only Mr. George Buchanan made a hot attack on them in the House and prophesied their failure. Nor was there any strong expression of antagonism at this stage by the unemployed themselves. Those who had been in the habit of agitating among the unemployed and endeavouring to organize them in unemployed organizations had been disappointed at the somewhat philosophic way in which they appeared to take the new proposals.

There was, however, a complete change when the unemployed had had one week's experience of the operation of the Unemployment Assistance Board's scales of relief in actual practice. On paper they had looked reasonable as compared with previous provisions. In some directions they appeared to afford improvement. For instance, an allowance of three shillings a week for a young child looked like an improvement over the former child allowance of two shillings. It proved far different in practice. And when the unemployed realized how their lives and livelihood were going to be affected, and how their employed relatives in their households were to suffer along with them, there was the most spontaneous outburst of discontent that had shown itself in the last fifteen years. It surprised even those who had kept in the closest and most intimate contact with large numbers of unemployed. It startled local authorities who had been dealing with the problem for several years. A majority of Members of Parliament felt its impact, and the National Government which had sat since 1931 without having to confront any serious difficulty, felt itself severely shaken. The regulations were not withdrawn, but the Unemployment Assistance (Temporary Provisions) Act was hurriedly passed, which meant that they became to all intents inoperative in many parts of the country, and particularly in those parts of the country where the incidence of unemployment was heaviest. Shortly afterwards Major Oliver Stanley was transferred from the

Ministry of Labour to the Board of Education, and Mr. Ernest Brown became Minister of Labour.

Since that date a period of nearly eighteen months has elapsed, during which the Unemployment Assistance Board have been preparing new regulations which it was hoped would prove more acceptable to the people, and be less likely to cause a repetition of the furore that arose from the operation of the earlier ones.

If Parliament is any gauge for the measurement of public opinion in the country one would expect a far stronger outcry in late November or early December, when the new regulations become effective, than was raised eighteen months ago when the first ones were produced. The debate in the Commons lasted three days and all through one night, so that there was no break between one day's sitting and the next. There was no period when there was any lag in the proceedings. Tempers were hot and interruptions frequent. Three Members were suspended, and at the conclusion of the debate when the Divisions were taking place there was general turmoil.

Most of the Members taking part came from constituencies where there were considerable numbers of unemployed. Many of them had unemployed men and women among their immediate friends. Some had unemployed among their relations and even in their own family circles. They felt and gave expression to the feeling that there was something radically wrong with the whole service that based itself on these regulations and that it could only work social evil, while having for its avowed objective social well-being. The feelings they expressed were undoubtedly milder than the feelings of the men and women who will themselves be affected.

Few people really take the trouble to try to put themselves into the minds and souls of unemployed men and women. They are regarded as a rather irritating social and economic problem, causing the nation a considerable amount of expenditure, which is usually called "unproductive" expenditure. Their essential humanity is lost sight of. They become statistics. They are "cases." They are an awkward item on the national balance-sheet. They are subject for discussion among social reformers. The fact that they are men and women tends to fall into the

background and they are thought of in block, not individually. There are still to be found those who regard them as bottom dogs—the weakest who have gone to the wall, and who think that, while there may be an exception here and there, in the main they are the unfit, and that there is a certain rough social justice in their being in the miserable and humiliating situation in which they find themselves.

When industry functioned in a more normal way than it has done in the post-war period there may have been some truth in this conception. There is little or none now. Certain industries have been hit severely by new economic circumstances. In certain districts these industries have come to a complete standstill, or are mere shadows of their former selves. The men and women who have been accustomed to earn their livelihoods in these industries have been laid idle, and remain idle, although they are no different in respect either of character or skill to men and women who have remained in employment.

In South Wales we have perhaps the best example. The men engaged in the ordinary export coal trade have been largely laid idle: the men in the anthracite mines have had reasonably regular employment. Character, habits and skill are much the same in both cases.

The shipbuilding industry provides other examples. Shipbuilding has never come to a complete standstill, but for most of the last fifteen years the total orders coming forward even in the best of these years could only fill a fraction of the berths that were available. Sometimes what orders were forthcoming went to the Clyde rather than to the Tyne. Some Clyde shipyard workers found employment while their fellow-craftsmen on the Tyne remained idle. There may have been geographical differences, differences in financial opportunities, differences in business acumen between the two places that decided where the work was to be done, but the question of the skill and character of the workmen was not a determining factor. All the more intelligent workers realize that they are not the victims of their own moral or other defects, but are the victims of economic causes over which others may have control, but they have none. The unemployed man, when considering the steps taken socially to relieve his necessities, has this broad fact in his mind, and has

all the time a strong feeling that he is suffering in his own person for sins that are not of his committing.

Many people who have never been up against the problem themselves, and who usually belong to other sections of the community than the working class, say impatiently, "Why do they not move into some other district and go into some other industry?" The employed and comfortably-placed people have no right to expect in the unemployed greater powers of initiative and adaptability than they have themselves. They must permit the unemployed man to have hopes that things will get better, so that he may be saved the pain, trouble and risk of pulling up his stakes, breaking his social and family ties, leaving the familiar places and trying to adapt himself to new work when he may be a person well over middle age and settled in his habits and way of life. He is generally aware also that, while his district is practically derelict and his industry at a standstill, other districts have also their difficulties, though perhaps not so heavy as his own, and other industries have their quota of unemployed persons, so that many already skilled in the industry are unable to obtain work, and he asks himself what chance has he, a complete novice, of getting in when many who are experts are left out.

It is frequently forgotten that labour exchanges were established, not primarily as places from which unemployment benefit would be distributed, but as an effective medium through which men desiring work would be put in touch with vacant jobs. The system of exchanges is now nation-wide from Lands End to John o' Groats, and although the work of paying out benefits has heavily exceeded the function of finding jobs the latter function still continues. The Ministry of Labour speedily reports a scarcity of labour in any area to all the exchanges, and unemployed men are bound to go to suitable vacancies when they are offered. Many have travelled hundreds of miles from their homes to take these jobs, but while some have established themselves in the new areas, others have found that the job was only of a very temporary nature, or that they did not suit the kind of work, and have had bitter experiences as a consequence. When the criticism is made that many show lack of initiative, these facts should always be borne in mind, and the further fact

that the Labour Exchange provides, in the queue and the groups that gather outside, a very useful meeting place for the exchanging of experiences between unemployed men and women, and that the majority of them are very well informed as to the general possibilities for them. If, as is confidently expected by many, the rearmament activities of the Government call for the services of many more workers, no serious difficulty will be found in getting men to leave their district or change their industry, provided there is some guarantee of decent wage conditions and some assurance of fairly prolonged employment.

The mention of rearmament provides the opportunity to draw an analogy between the unemployed and the army reservist. This may enable those people who seem to resent the unemployed man as a social nuisance to see him rather as a reservist in the industrial army holding himself in readiness to be called on when required. In the fighting services there are roughly as many men again in reserve as there are serving men. They receive their allowances, they report periodically, occasionally they do some training for short periods. No public objection is ever raised to their receiving their reserve pay. There is no means test, no family inquisition, no inquiry into what they are doing with themselves. They have undertaken to be ready when called on. The unemployed worker has given a similar undertaking with reference to industry. It becomes the nation's duty to see that he has the wherewithal to keep himself fit against the day when his services will be called for. A large number of them see themselves in this light, and have strong feelings of resentment when the nation apparently tries to fulfil its part of the bargain in a mean and ungenerous way—mean in the actual material provision, but even more ungenerous in spirit.

The Poor Law tradition dies hard, although it took its origins in much more primitive times. Bumble is still flabbergasted when *Oliver Twist* asks for more. He is entitled to live, but only just; he must expect no more than to have destitution relieved.

It is not widely realized that the unemployed man with his seventeen shillings, or, if married, with the wife and family allowances in addition, keeps himself and his family more cheaply than the inmates of the workhouses, convict prisons, asylums or hospitals are maintained. He is usually a good citizen and

a good family man. The bad character is as exceptional among the unemployed as he is in the general community. Out of a total of something in the neighbourhood of a million persons who came under the purview of the Board during its eighteen months operation, proceedings for fraud in connection with their benefits were taken against only 308 persons, and in only 82 cases did the magistrates regard the case as sufficiently serious to warrant imprisonment. It shows a very high standard of honesty that only about three persons in 1,000, living on a low level of existence, have succumbed to the temptation to add a few shillings to their miserable pittance by dishonest statements as to their circumstances. This fact should be borne strongly in mind when epithets about good-for-nothing wastrels are thoughtlessly thrown about. The other hundreds of thousands who live respectably, keep up a decent outward appearance, go about the community in which they live, maintain a family life, social contacts, very often connections with religious bodies and political organizations, meeting the obligations of the relationships, are performing miracles of self-restraint and frugality which could not be equalled, let alone excelled, by the more fortunately placed sections of the community. When in addition they do it with a brave front and frequently a smiling face to the world they can command admiration from all those who can appreciate good qualities of character wherever and by whomever they are displayed. The nation, through its statesmen, its press and its pulpits should be more vocal in recognition of these facts, and more generous in its general attitude. It could well afford to be more generous both in spirit and in actual cash.

When in 1931 the attempt was made to blame the economic crisis of that period on the lavish expenditure on the unemployed it was patently a dishonest piece of political propaganda. The nation which could carry a war debt of eight thousand millions, about which there was no serious outcry, was not likely to sink into bankruptcy over a debt of a hundred millions for unemployment, accumulated over a number of years. Unemployed men knew this and resented the attack bitterly. They resent it more now after five years, when subsidies have been granted to a variety of industrial and agricultural interests, and when the

Government has found it possible to find large sums, to which no limiting figure has yet been put, for rearmament.

They feel, in the presence of these vast expenditures, that a few shillings extra a head could have been found for them, meaning so little to the nation, but so much to them in their family lives. They feel this all the more because they realize that one of the prime factors in causing their unemployment is the obvious one that the productive power of the community has run ahead of its consuming power. It is very irksome to a cotton worker to know that he has to go without clothes because he and his fellows have produced too much cloth, and to a miner that he should shiver before an empty grate because he has produced too much coal. He knows that he could help to solve the problem of consumption with some money, just as he helped to solve the problem of production with his loom or his pickaxe.

His greatest resentment of all is not, however, over the miserable amounts that he is paid, but over the conditions under which they are paid, and the condition that rouses him most is the means test.

It is frequently repeated, particularly in Parliament, that you cannot pay out public money without a means test. The first answer to that is that you have done so, and are doing it now. Even unemployed men know that the subsidies to industries have been paid out of the public funds without any inquiry into the personal resources of the members of the firms receiving them. When this fact is mentioned it is met with hot protest as ungenerous, or pushed aside as irrelevant. It is neither ungenerous nor irrelevant, except on the assumption that in these matters there is one standard for the rich and another for the poor.

Unemployment benefit is paid without a means test for a period of 26 weeks. On the twenty-seventh week, if the man still remains unemployed the means test comes into operation. He is presumed to have exhausted all he has paid for by his contributions. In strict fact he has done nothing of the kind, since the Insurance Fund is in these days showing a very substantial balance each year. Before the economy cuts the unemployed person drew benefit for sixteen months for the same number of contributions. If a man is fortunate enough to secure thirty

weeks employment in a period of two years he can draw his benefit without any means test. If he has only 29 weeks employment he has to be means-tested.

When the means test is applied it plays havoc in a working-class home. Take a common example: the father of a family is unemployed, and there are one or two sons or daughters over fourteen years of age in employment. In the beginning the father may be drawing full benefit rates. As the young folk grow older they get increases in wages. As their wages go up their father's allowance goes down proportionally, so that the family see every advance in their position producing a deterioration in their father's. The father feels that he is a drag on his children. The children feel that he is humiliated. It is not surprising if paternal authority is diminished and the family splits up.

Another common example is where the eldest son, a young man, has a good job at, say, £3 10s. a week. In the family is the father, unemployed, mother and three younger children. Without the eldest son in the home the father would draw about 35s. a week in Unemployment Assistance. With the son in the home he draws nothing, or only a shilling or two. The material interests of the family are best served if the son leaves home, although all the non-material interests would be best served if he remained.

A very expensive State machine has to be maintained to investigate the means of the persons affected. Apart from earnings of members of the family, old age pensions, soldiers' pensions, sick insurance, and workmen's compensation, it has been found that when tabulated the resources of the unemployed total only £75,000 among 600,000 people, an average of 5s. a head, in the form of savings, investments and property.

Is it worth while having this expensive machinery and arousing the widespread sense of injustice and irritation, splitting up family groups with social consequences that cannot be measured, in order to catch what is demonstrated to be a very small minority of wasters, shirkers and frauds, who can easily be dealt with by the ordinary law of the land, or controlled by other social agencies than the one set up to relieve the needs of the unemployed and to promote their welfare?

WAGNER IN LONDON

BY ETHEL SMYTH

IF anything can bring home to English people how fast the wheel of time revolves—though many who are past their first youth will perhaps not thank me for underlining the fact—it will be a request to step backwards into the year 1876—when for the first and only time in his life Wagner set foot on our shores—and note how much was visible at that time, anyhow in England, of a luminary whose light now shines with a brilliance that shows no sign of diminution.

There have been times, even in Germany, when ageing music-lovers have maintained that his hold was relaxing ; and, of course, there are tides in human affairs. In fact, I seem to remember that before the war Wagner was having a tidal slump.

But no one who has created with enough violence and capacity, with furious enough desire and limitless powers of self-expression, ever disappears finally from the scene ; and it can only induce a smile when we are told that the day of George Eliot, of Thackeray, of Mendelssohn and many others is over. Thirty years ago this used to be said of Dickens ; but today even the youngest and most cocksure of the many young people who declare they can't stand him must be aware that, incomprehensible as it seems to them, Dickens is as alive today as he was fifty years ago.

Or, again (since these reflections are in part addressed to musicians), look at Bach—towards the end of his life laughed at, nicknamed “old pigtail” by the public which was declaring that his now forgotten grandchildren were the really talented ones of the Bach dynasty ! For in those days music ran in certain German families on what you may call dynastic lines ; even in my day there was in Leipzig a group of aunts, uncles, and their children—Röntgen and Klengel by name—who could make up a small

orchestra in the family. And as Bach had eighteen children there were plenty of grandchildren about.

Meanwhile, at seventy years of age, hale, hearty, and as productive as ever, working all day long in the musty room in the *Thomas Schule* at the top of three pairs of stairs (up which in 1877 I clambered—as it were to worship at some shrine on the summit of a mountain) there sat the greatest musician the world has ever known. Still *Kantor*, still rating the choir boys for scamping their dotted quavers, still playing the organ in the *Thomas Kirche* over the way, he had to face as best he could the fact that he had outlived his day, while money and honours were being showered on pigmies.

Various circumstances had combined to turn the thoughts of the musical world in other directions; for one thing the up-rising and insurging of the Italian school. Anyhow, a few decades after his death he was forgotten, or at most drifted hither and thither in a few musical memories as ghosts are wont to drift. Then, in the early nineteenth century, the obscuring cloud lifted. A rising young genius in Leipzig, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, had always cherished a passion for the little of Bach's work that was on the market, and one day it occurred to him to overhaul the piles of dusty old scores stacked away in various cupboards in the *Thomas Schule*. And there he came across a fat manuscript roughly twirled up in ragged paper. On it was written: "Passion according to St. Matthew, by Johann Sebastian Bach!"

Since that day the pedestal on which Bach stands would seem to have thrown out roots; new blossoms are constantly springing forth on a miraculous growth that will never cease to flower. And so will it be with that immortal stirrer-up of human passions, Richard Wagner.

It is not surprising that in the 'seventies we in England neither knew nor cared anything about Wagner, who in his own country, in spite of early successes, was still fighting for recognition. Our musical culture was then at a low ebb. There was, of course, the Royal Academy of Music at Marylebone, and recently the Royal College of Music had come into existence. Yet many budding English musicians—for instance, Stanford, Sullivan, and Percy Pitt—were convinced that only on German soil could

a musical education be acquired, more particularly at Leipzig, still haunted (so we believed) by the shades of Schumann and Mendelssohn.

Meanwhile, we were not wholly bereft of good music in London. Frau Schumann, still in vigorous middle life, still playing gloriously, was a cherished visitor, and, together with Joachim, whom she looked on as a son, was introducing us to the latest among the classical geniuses, Brahms. And even I, a country bumpkin, knew that the name of Wagner—that bold innovator who upset everyone's notions of law and order and had the effrontery to declare himself worshipper and lineal descendant of Beethoven—was anathema to the classical school.

At that time my life was that of any other country girl—made up of dances, games, picnics, and riding, varied by occasional expeditions to London to attend an afternoon "Pop" at St. James's Hall. But one day I made the acquaintance of a delightful old Jewess, Madame Schwabe, who turned out to be one of Frau Schumann's oldest friends, and I saw she was interested to hear I was one of those who would stand for hours and hours in the queue at St. James's Hall, ready, once the doors were opened, to dash in and secure a platform seat in closest possible proximity to Frau Schumann's piano. Then . . . lo ! . . . soon after came a note from Madame Schwabe bidding me meet her next Saturday in the artists' room after the concert and be presented to the great artist.

I am certain that Frau Schumann, whom in after years I came to know well and love dearly, meant to be most gracious. But she was the shyest of women, and, given my own trepidation and the delirium of that afternoon, I only remember two incidents. One was learning from Madame Schwabe that before every concert the same scene was enacted in the artists' room : Madame Schumann in floods of tears, declaring she was too nervous to play at all, and the attendant daughter patting her mother's fine, muscular shoulders, and murmuring : " But dear, good, little Mama, thou knowest full well that once thy foot is on the platform all these feelings will vanish ! " (which they did).

The other recollection is Frau Schumann saying : " I hope this child has not yet been inoculated with the Wagner poison ! " And Frau Schwabe, who knew nothing whatsoever about my

musical tastes, but who, in spite of founding a society for providing the Neapolitan copper-diving boys with swimming drawers, was a woman of the world, hastened to assure her friend that I was "a thoro' paced little classicist."

Truth to tell I had already advanced one hesitating foot into the forbidden territory, urged on by the only musical authority with whom I was in touch, who himself passionately admired Wagner and implored me to pay no attention to the diatribes of pedants. This wise and go-ahead man was only an amateur, but, if ever cradle had been rocked by the muse of music it was that of Alexander Ewing, whom Fate had driven as a penniless youth into the Army Service Corps—a branch of our forces in which prestige was nil but pay excellent. He is known to some as composer of "Jerusalem the Golden"—a hymn-tune in which there is a quality of ecstasy, Anglican ecclesiastical bonds notwithstanding, of which I am even more conscious now than when I was a girl. His wife was one of the gifted Gatty family, in fact no less a person than the beloved "Aunt Judy" of her mother's famous magazine, and herself authoress of *Jackanapes* and other entrancing books. My home was five miles from Aldershot Camp, and when in 1875 or thereabouts the Ewings were sent to Aldershot, Mr. Ewing and I, birds of a feather, at once flew into each other's arms. He insisted on teaching me harmony, and between whiles would bang through the vocal scores of *Fidelio*, *Lohengrin* and *The Flying Dutchman*, these being the first operas I had ever come across.

One day the papers announced that Wagner was coming to London in order to conduct a series of concerts of his own music at the Albert Hall, and the Ewings obtained my parents' permission to take me to one of them.

Now the only really permanent orchestra in or near London at that time was Auguste Mann's Crystal Palace band; and, given the deplorably low level of orchestral playing that must have obtained elsewhere, I can imagine with what sort of crowd the unfortunate Wagner found himself called on to work. For instance, in 1876 the iniquitous deputy system was so firmly rooted that thirty years later more than one orchestra split on that wretched old rock, people like Henry Wood and Thomas

Beecham declining to countenance such a practice. And the conductor who insisted on all four horns performing in a score written for four horns was considered a pedant, and, what is far worse, "no sportsman!"

How often in past years have I revisualized that Albert Hall drama . . . thought of the bewildered composer suddenly called on to cope with conditions in which music such as his could not have had, so to speak, a dog's chance . . . gradually realizing that his agent had lured him into a god-forsaken country, where *at the performance* a trombone might be found deputising for a low horn, where only two of the prescribed three flutes would put in an appearance, and where at the concert, half the strings were players he had never set eyes on at rehearsal! And when I further remember that the wretched man could not speak one word of English; when I picture to myself that series dragging on day after day—one damp squib exploding after another in that vast hall—then, more vividly than all the rest, flashes into my vision the first and only sight ever vouchsafed me of the master. And, accompanying that vision, I hear an inner voice, strangled by shame, awe, and pity for all composers who have had to go down to the sea of music in unseaworthy ships—a voice that puts, as well it may, the question: "How could Wagner have borne it?" . . .

What that vision shows me is a stumpy, short-legged, absolutely furious man with a huge head, evidently controlling with difficulty an impulse to leap from his little platform, and instead of beating the blameless air with his baton, break it into a thousand pieces over the heads of the players.

And if the conductor was obviously furious, the demeanour of the band was equally far from anything dimly suggestive of harmony. "Just look at those fellers," said a man who was sitting next us to his wife, "did you ever see a lot of men in such a temper?" "I don't blame 'em," said she. "*You'd* be in a temper if you had to sit there hour after hour making that 'orrible noise." "But, Mary," objected the husband, "they're paid to do it!"

Mr. Ewing overheard this conversation as distinctly as I did, but though richly endowed with the sense of humour he was far too angry to smile, and kept on telling us that such an infamous

performance could give no faint idea of the music—and indeed I remember that Siegfried's Funeral March, partly no doubt because it is not built on classical lines, made little or no effect.

Financially the undertaking was a failure, nor can it have done much good to Wagner's cause. Anyhow, one would-be youthful worshipper went home, carefully hiding in her heart a distinct feeling of disappointment.

The moral of these fugitive glances into our musical past and it is perhaps well to recall these things before the last survivors of that epoch have quitted the scene—is this.

Various of our conductors who have starred on the Continent and elsewhere tell us, and I am certain it is true, that nowhere is more good music played than in London; also that though (owing, of course, to £ s. d.) individual orchestras here and there are on a level we cannot attain, the *general* level of orchestral playing is higher in England than anywhere else.

If then, as many believe, the wireless is decimating our never very reliable concert audiences, at all events we are making a good struggle for survival. And perhaps it is given to England, a late starter in the music-race round Parnassus, to keep going so valiantly, that those who, disheartened by the vogue of mechanical music, have fallen out, may again take up the running, and in the end help to kill that parrot-cry: "I can hear it just as well in my armchair at home." We know, of course, that this is an illusion. And speaking for myself I am old enough to affirm—caring not who denies the adage—that in the end truth *does* prevail.

HOMER FILMED

BY STANLEY CASSON

THE pre-requisites of a really successful film, to judge from what I have seen, are simple and axiomatic. There is Stage I, in which the excitement and curiosity of the audience is whetted and they are invited to take part in the diagnosis, as in any well-organized thriller. Then comes Stage II when the author begins, but ever so gently, to take control, to drop hints, to give clues and to lead you gently towards the realization of what is afoot.

To the author's preliminary presentation of Stage I the immediate presence of the Star is almost fatal. Once the Star has appeared there can no longer be any mystification, the audience merely sits back and waits for the automatic machinery of the story to proceed. And that is why one-star films never have any true dramatic quality as contrasted with pluristellar films, where each and any of the constellation may be the character to spot. Better still, where the Stars are restrained from following too sparkling and too meteoric courses; the "39 Steps" was a masterpiece, in that the gifted stars who played in it, left you in doubt as to who was going to be the main character, and who was to be merely a superb foil.

In Stage III most of the cards are on the table, or at least the scheme of things is beginning to take shape. But there is always in reserve a certain possibility of doubt and error in which the audience can be deeply involved. "Can the thing *really* work out right?" they ask. "Is it possible that the hero can conceivably get out of his appalling difficulties? Will the villain unexpectedly 'come clean' and spoil the hoped-for *dénouement* where Virtue is to be triumphant? or will he go on on his horrible path of wickedness until he is defeated and we all go home feeling that our ticket-money was not wasted on a sad ending?"

For, let us be quite frank, we do all love a happy ending. I

shall never forget the grief and distress which accompanied my appreciation of "Queen Christina" when, at the last, the Garbo stood at the prow of her ship, with the tears welling to her lovely eyes, and the corpse of her lover on the quarter-deck. I scrabbled for my handkerchief and resolved never to spend half-a-crown again on such anguish. (But, of course, I went again the next night.)

In the triumphant progress of a fine story, in which the right people get what they deserve in the end, there is some kind of escape from the realities of life, where such triumphs are rare; and in the cinema the population of the world looks for that private heaven which is usually denied to them individually. I have sat in cinemas in Greek villages, in Turkish cities and in remote Balkan towns, in provincial American cities and in the usual European capitals. Always it is the same thing. An audience composed of Greeks, Turks, Armenians and Italians in a port-town in Cyprus were as vociferously appreciative of the triumph of Virtue as a critical audience of Communists, Oxford Undergraduates or New Englanders. We need not delude ourselves into thinking that there is anything specifically Anglo-Saxon about Virtue Triumphant. Oddly enough it appeals to Kalmucks, Tartars, Croats, Letts and Bessarabians with equal force. So, too, does the preliminary mystification, the unexpected access of intolerable pathos, the sudden flash of brave violence and all the other spasmodic elements that go to make a great and exciting drama. Not least is the irony which a fine artist inevitably introduces from time to time, the swift confidential aside to the audience that says: "*You* know well enough what is going to happen to that poor devil, don't you? but *he* doesn't: now watch." Then we all feel slightly superior to the actors in the drama and, as Aristotle once told us, begin to feel sorry for the man or woman who is going to "catch it in the neck." Our pity and our terror are neatly blended.

So much for the pre-requisites and for the interplay of author and audience. Yet scores of films a year, seeking to be great films, neglect all these elementary devices which have been hallowed by the dramatists of two and a half thousand years. Here and there the searchers have plunged into a remoter past and produced some titillating story from the Renaissance. I

once saw an Italian film all about the Borgias. But it was difficult to see any hope of *Virtue Triumphant* here. The audience got restive after the fifth poisoning and the tenth assassination, and finally revolted at the sight of half-clad heroines being dragged round the stone floors of Florentine Palaces by their hair. That was a poor film, and all too true to history. Life, we all felt, is like that, and we had not paid to see a glorified and concentrated version of daily happenings. We had hoped for a rest in some more imaginative world.

Research further back to Rome brought no relief. "*Ben Hur*" gave us a crashing, clashing world of ridiculous chariot-races and ramping legionaries that failed to make any contact with normal life.

In despair the strong silent men in offices rushed into the future. And now we have had "*Things to Come*." As Mr. Wells's recreated civilization advanced we all felt chillier and chillier. We saw little advantage in living in a world in which the only difference seemed to be that you could travel endlessly up and down in large glass-tube lifts or sit in glass armchairs feeling, as the actors certainly felt, that the day after you would get a touch of lumbago. It was the most unhuman film I have ever seen. No, the Future, as an investment for film-creators, has small hope. All it amounts to in the end is fine photography, immense cog-wheels revolving and hideous palaces of glass and concrete that carry no conviction and are largely devoid of beauty.

And so to the Past once more. I am amazed that no single one of those strong silent men has even considered the one story that would make the greatest of all modern films—the *Odyssey*. Why the producers will persist in giving us *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *David Copperfield* and all those other dusty dramas of the infant industrial age I simply cannot tell. Beyond their familiarity they have nothing to commend them, least of all as grand drama. But *Homer*—why, there is the material ready to hand with the minimum need of alteration! The *Iliad*, I grant, would be uphill work. There the passions of brutal men are too violent, the rewards of virtue rarely evident, the adventures of great men often not such as to move us to pity, though they may well move us to terror. The tale of *Dolon* may resemble

an episode from "G Men," but it is not nice. Nor are the doings of Helen and Alexander exactly such as to point a moral—not at least in the *Iliad*, unless that moral is that you should not be a boring husband, or that if you are a handsome lover you should not go out of your way to get shot. Nor is Achilles the sort of actor to rouse cheers. He was the sort of big, strong bully who waited behind trees in ambush to shoot at poor stripplings, or who crashed through the enemy front line on his brain-spattering way in a manner that ill-suits the screen.

But the *Odyssey*—there is a chance in a million! It falls like a ripe fruit into the lap of the producer, the script and scenario already clearly defined. All that is needed to make it ready is cutting and selection and emphasis on the structure of the story and the working out of the plot. For the *Odyssey* is no haphazard accumulation of stories, as are so many epics, but a single great tale with an almost aggressive moral and a happy ending where Virtue is more than triumphant—it is annihilating in its success. For the preface to the story (which, incidentally, would be omitted from any film version) shows the Gods in Council. They discuss the greatest crime of all Greece—the murder of Agamemnon, home from the wars, by his wife and her lover, the crime that was held up in all generations as the great offence against heaven, humanity and all moral codes. It served Greeks at all times as the great warning against wrongdoing, for the crime itself was the result of previous crimes and it led in turn to others, whose expiation was the subject of some of the finest drama of Greece. Rightly was Homer held up as the great moral teacher, for here at the very outset of the *Odyssey* are two stories contrasted, the hideous murder of Agamemnon who returned home to find a wife who destroyed him, and the tale of Odysseus, also homecoming from the wars, who found in the end a wife whose fidelity was so unassailable, whose patience was so stable and whose joy in the end at seeing him so genuine, that not even the dullest yokel could not learn the lesson suggested to him. But the *Odyssey* tells its tale, not with the trumpet-blasts of direct command that make virtue, as ordained by the Hebrew prophets and law-givers, a thing to shudder at and accept; but it tells it with such cunning that the hearer is barely aware that he is being told the advantages of virtue over vice,

and so enthralled by the story itself that, when the *dénouement* comes at the end, he is still oblivious of the fact that he has, incidentally, been given a stern lesson in behaviour. He cheers for the hero, returns home and falls asleep with that comfortable feeling we all have after a good film, where the morals are impeccable.

The story on the film would open most propitiously with the preliminary scenes of mystification. The House of Penelope, the first interview of Telemachus and Athene (disguised); the crowd of hearty young men waiting for the chance to inherit the property of the missing man—and incidentally marry the widow. The observer's first thought, presuming that he knows nothing at all about the plot, would be "What exactly is going on? Something or someone rather important is missing." Soon enough we find the absence of the hero dominating the whole early phase of the story. Where is that ingenious man and mighty warrior, Odysseus? Here is his home, his wife, and son, his household, and no one knows where the master is, whose arrival would put everything right again. "Among the crowd Telemachus sat despondently," says Homer, "imagining that at any moment his father might come somehow from somewhere." Here is the right mood of expectancy for the audience.

But we must consider the setting, the costume, the background of it all. One thing is perfectly clear. The film must be made in Greece, in so far as scenes on sea and in the countryside occur. The House of Odysseus and the Palace of Alcinous can be provided in the usual way. But for the main setting of land and sea and mountain we have Ithaka itself, the scenery of which alone would make the film unique; for Scheria we have Corfu, perhaps the loveliest island in all Greece. The Voyage of Telemachus to Sparta gives the producer the unrivalled opportunity of taking shots of the snow-mountain scenery of Taygetus and its vast and superb valley beneath, where the river Eurotas glistens among its reeds. The film is made at the very start by its early shots of Greek scenery. In this setting the authentic tale begins. And the excitement rises after the first scene of mystification. Telemachus goes to get word of his father. His ship returns to Ithaka and there his enemies lay a trap, and wait behind a rock in a ship ready to sink him. But they are baffled.

And now we turn to Odysseus and the scene changes. The man whose name has so long intrigued us is seen asleep on the shore of Corfu, wrecked, exhausted and alone. And here comes one of the many great chances of the film—the Nausicaa scene. It must be handled with the greatest skill and delicacy, for it is one of the subtlest and finest scenes in all literature. Here is the need of a supreme actress.

Then comes the arrival of Odysseus at the Palace of Alcinous, guided by Nausicaa, and the next part of the film would be taken up with the adventures up to that time of Odysseus, as related by him to his host. And what an opportunity for good photography is here. Calypso's isle can be done at Madeira, of which it was almost certainly an echo. Scylla and Charybdis are there waiting at Messina Straits. The long series of tales can be made as an interlude to the main story.

Then comes the first onward move of the plot. Odysseus comes at last to Ithaka. By this time we, the audience, are in the know. We are aware that the grim beggar, whom no one recognizes, is the man himself, and we watch, as the dramatic irony works out, how slowly he wins recognition. The old nurse, recognizing the wound as she bathes Odysseus, gives our producer ready made, a supreme dramatic moment. Another is the recognition by his dog, as heart-wringing a tale as any producer could wish for ; for no producer can leave his audience tearless and succeed. And then the great final scene when the father throws off his beggar's rags, while his father as well, and his son, stand side by side to defend their home against the intruders and despoilers of domesticity and virtue. The grim Homeric end of the killing of the disloyal servants can be omitted. It would hardly be tolerated.

I am the more surprised that no producer has yet attempted the *Odyssey* when I remember how successful it was, produced as a play by Beerbohm Tree a few years before the war. And everything about that production militated against success. The text was by Stephen Phillips, pompous, un-Homeric and thoroughly Edwardian. Beerbohm Tree himself, despite all his fine acting, failed to give even the least indication of the hard bitter strength of character of Odysseus. He was just a plump, amiable, ill-treated, and unfortunate wayfarer, who unexpectedly

proved to be the hero. Perhaps Nancy Price as Calypso was the best character and the best actress of all. On the whole, the main current of the story was well brought out and the scenes moved with vigour, humour, and grandeur. The greatest success of all was that dark visit to Hades by Odysseus and his men, and their interview with the mighty dead. I remember vividly the murky scene, with souls of the dead passing and re-passing in the air, small wraiths like bats, who twittered and wailed with all the authenticity of the Homeric description. Below were reeds and muddy swamps and a dim green light, against which the armour of Odysseus shone and glinted. What a chance here for the films, with all their technical capacities ! Think of that great moment when Achilles comes—"Will you find yet some madder adventure to cap this coming down alive to Hades among the silly dead, these worn-out mockeries of men ?" he asks. And Odysseus says : "Down here, Achilles, I find you Prince among the dead. Death to you can be no grief at all !" But Achilles checks him : "Make not light of death before me, O shining Odysseus," he replies curtly. "Would that I were a menial on earth, tied to some poor man who has to pinch and scrape to keep alive !" And he asks news of his son. Odysseus tells him, and Achilles strides away into the gloom, exultant. Imagine how this great moment can be rendered by brilliant photography and brief words ! The dim figure of Achilles standing, with the more substantial figure of Odysseus seated before him, with the reeds and pale waters of the Styx between them, and a green light on the armour of Odysseus, a paler light on that of Achilles and on the tip of his spearhead ! If you want pathos, grandeur, sorrow, and tragedy, here in the scene in Hades you will get it. Then can come the contrast of the ship of Odysseus forging through the blue waves, dashing the foam from its bows and sighting the peaks and cliffs of a dozen islands in the upper air.

In Beerbohm Tree's production there was another fatal element. No one had decided what was the period of the events. The architecture was partly Greek partly Minoan. The costumes were pure pastiche. Athena was helmeted with a vaguely Roman helmet, Calypso dressed like some lady from an Arthurian romance ; the suitors were garbed in varieties of

fifth-century military uniform of the Periclean age. On this matter, which is vital, the producer of our hypothetical film must be quite definite. His ships, chariots, houses, and city scenes can come from our stock of knowledge of the eighth, seventh, and sixth-century B.C. We need not be pedantic purists in the matter, and can advance a little beyond the lifetime of Homer himself for our material. But we must stop well short at about 500 B.C., and no element of Periclean Athens must come in to mar our archaic harmony. We can mix our armaments to some extent, just as Homer does. Hector can be armed with ancient Minoan shield and spear, if you like, while Achilles can be given the pure Greek armour and panoply. It is so in Homer, and the anachronisms afford relief from monotony.

We shall be asked for the humorous element. Every film must have it. It is there waiting for us. One of the oddest characters in the *Odyssey* is poor Elpenor, of whom Homer says : "There was Elpenor, the youngest, no great fighter and scatter-brained." Elpenor got drunk, fell off the roof when the crew were on Circe's Island, and passed quietly out of the story. But he was the odd man out, the fool of the company, the man who involved them all in considerable difficulties. Recently the French novelist, Jean Giraudoux, has written a diverting version of the *Odyssey*, in which the whole story of adventure hinges on the character (or lack of character) of this pathetic man. And there are many other minor characters where wit and humour can have full play, though there is no scope for burlesque or knock-about. Our story is as tense and continuous as that of "Queen Christina," or "Things to Come," where farce is distinctly out of place. If "Martin Chuzzlewit" and "Bleak House," and "Little Lord Fauntleroy" can lead people to the box office with the lure of familiarity, what then will be the queue waiting to see an *Odyssey* !

THE CRISIS IN AMERICAN LABOUR

BY S. K. RATCLIFFE

THE schism between the American Federation of Labour and the new industrial unionism, which was made complete and irrevocable last month, is the most significant occurrence in the history of the Labour movement in North America since the genesis of trade-unionism sixty years ago. The catastrophe must be looked upon as inevitable. Root principles and vital interests are involved, and no compromise was possible. Throughout the past twelve months, while the crisis was developing in full public view, the most various and determined efforts were made, particularly by church and social leaders, to avert the declaration of war. All such efforts were futile: from the beginning there was no hope of conciliation. The fight is over fundamentals.

The American Federation of Labour, controlling the main body of trade-unionism, has been maintained by its close oligarchy upon a basis of sectional craft organization. During a period of more than half a century it has been directed by only two boss presidents, the late Samuel Gompers and his surviving successor, William Green. It is a powerful association which has from time to time rendered important service to the cause of organized Labour. But, demonstrably, it belongs to an age of industrial America that has gone, and we have to recognize that the events of 1936 mark the opening of a new and momentous chapter. There are probably not less than 40,000,000 workers in the United States capable of being organized. The total membership of the A.F. of L. is little more than 4,000,000.

Twelve years have elapsed since the death of Samuel Gompers, the first autocrat of the Federation. Since the 'eighties he had been immovable (America is a land of presidents, and in national politics alone are they automatically retired). Gompers could not be made to see that the world was changing. He was con-

vinced that the only possible form of labour organization was craft unionism, which meant in America unions of the skilled occupations, mainly Anglo-Saxon in racial character, to the exclusion of the vast horde of polyglot immigrant workers. The upholding of the American artisan's standard of living was the chief concern of the A.F. of L., and this, for Gompers and his associates, involved the maintenance of the barrier, alike in wages and in privilege, against the multitude of new Americans, still in large part illiterate. This policy and the feeling behind it were understandable enough: fear of the European masses was entirely natural. But conditions, after all, were being swiftly transformed, and the continuance of the Gompers attitude by William Green was calamitous for Labour in general. The leaders of the A.F. of L. had missed the great chance provided by the expansion of industry in wartime, when they worked in co-operation with the Federal Government, and it is not inaccurate to say that the twelve years between Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt were strewn with lost opportunities.

The American Federation of Labour was, by reason of its constitution and philosophy, unable to cope with the greater realities of the time. The first of these, obviously, was mass production, which creates a new order of affairs—a form of labour different from the old crafts, a fresh technique of management, and conditions throughout an industrial continent which, in any modern view, cry aloud for workers' organization upon an inclusive plan. The principal employers of the United States were long ago nationally organized, and the fact that the wage-earners as a class have been so slow to understand the logic of the employers' action and of their own need is one of the outstanding features of North American life. But there is no mystery about this. The great Republic has always been a bourgeois democracy. Not until the closing years of the nineteenth century, by which time the immigrant communities had grown large enough for a proletarian consciousness to emerge, did the necessary basis for industrial unionism come into existence, and then the early organizers of immigrant labour found themselves up against the unbreakable front of the A.F. of L., whose leaders could offer no concessions to a nascent power of which they stood in deadly fear. The new leaders were

Socialists, and many were immigrants ; the A.F. of L. was under conservative direction. Mass production, however, became the dominant reality. The workers in steel and automobiles, in rubber and textiles, as later in electricity, and radio fixtures, were drawn overwhelmingly (except in the Southern mills) from immigrant stocks, while every mining area was a melting-pot. Even if they had wished to attempt the task, the A.F. of L. could not have made even a beginning of unionism in the mass-production centres, and in the eyes of the great employing corporations labour-unionism has been and is now the Red Peril, the first and last enemy of industry and business.

Such was, very briefly, the condition of affairs when, in 1933. President Roosevelt and the Houses of Congress presented the American Federation of Labour with its most definite, and as we can now see its ultimate, opportunity for expansion. The original, and quickly defunct, National Industrial Recovery Act contained in its Section 7A a provision which the unions received and acclaimed as a definitive charter for organized Labour. This celebrated clause gave legal force to the right of all employees to be represented in negotiation with the employers by persons of their own choosing, and—far too simply and trustingly—the advocates of the New Deal strove to make the public believe that the long struggle of the unions for recognition and an acknowledged status had been brought to a favourable conclusion. But that was a complete illusion. The N.I.R.A. and its brief existence, together with the rapid moves of the industrialists for the evasion and defeat of the Act, were incidents of a transition from a stage of widely distributed conflict to a stage of positive and deliberate warfare. And that, we cannot doubt, is now being thoroughly prepared for.

Within the past twelve months events have moved with decisive rapidity and force. At the annual convention of the A.F. of L. in 1934 a move was made towards a change of policy with respect to industrial unionism—that is, of course, unions embracing all the workers in a given industry, without regard to craft or section. At the next Convention, held in Atlantic City a year ago, the fight was brought into the open, and the strength of the insurgent minority was more than sufficient to frighten the official Old Guard. In November, 1935, John L. Lewis

formed the Committee for Industrial Organization, which was designed as a compact fighting force. As Leader of the United Mine-Workers Mr. Lewis could point to a strong example of industrial unionism, with a large membership (in a difficult and anarchic field), a record of action, and a convincing reserve fund. His contention is that the time for large-scale organization in mass-production industries is overdue, that the old restricted leadership has broken down, and that the urgent task of building new unions successively in one defined province after another can and should be undertaken by his Committee. Soon after its creation the C.I.O. intervened with success in a rubber strike at Akron, Ohio. Next came an uprising on the part of the radio workers. The Executive Council of the A.F. of L. made an attempt to stifle it. The employees took their own line and formed an independent union, the United Electrical and Radio Workers of America, in an industry that is plainly destined to a future of immense importance. Meanwhile the United Automobile Workers' Union was beginning to act as though it were already independent of the A.F. of L. Council, while Mr. Lewis and the C.I.O. were surveying the ground preparatory to what must be their first major and very difficult enterprise, an assault upon the embattled powers of the Iron and Steel Institute. American leaders and tacticians never work through a single organization, even when the business in hand has all the appearance of a unified purpose. Hence we need not be surprised that as soon as the C.I.O. was found to be in working order a new and wider association, the Labour Non-Partisan League, was brought into being. Forecasts of possible developments are heard on all sides, and today one of the most frequent is the prediction that before the end of the next presidential term the Non-Partisan League may have expanded into a national Labour Party. That, however, is for the future to decide.

The most remarkable fact in this first stage of the new unionism is that the C.I.O. was able at once to gather in a dozen unions affiliated to the A.F. of L. They comprise about 40 per cent. of the total membership of the Federation. The Executive Council was, of course, alarmed, and it treated the insurgents with all the stiffness and unintelligence of the general-staff mind. An order was issued from the Washington headquarters

to the C.I.O. to disband. Needless to say, this was ignored, and the Executive Council then entered upon a course of action which afforded a contrast to English method and an interesting example of American procedure. The officials of the so-called rebel unions were summoned to a hearing before the Executive Council, and the big guns of the A.F. of L. treated the business as a formal trial, making elaborate speeches in the tradition of political impeachment. Mr. Lewis and his lieutenants refused to recognize the Council as a court, and did not appear.

The unions indicted for "open, defiant and flagrant insurrection" were twelve in number, with a total membership of nearly 1,250,000. A verdict of guilty was announced, and ten of the unions were served with formal notice that at the end of August their expulsion from the American Federation of Labour would take effect. Being excluded in advance of the annual delegates' convention, the lost unions will not be represented when the expulsion is confirmed by vote. The schism therefore is an accomplished fact; the Labour movement is irrevocably broken; and the old A.F. of L., with its tenacious organization (spreading into Canada and Mexico as well as over the United States), has received a mortal blow. The inference from the happenings of the past two years and from the difficulties of the A.F. of L. Executive is clear: the split was as nearly unavoidable as anything in human affairs can be. Mr. Green is understood to agree with the C.I.O. that the day of craft unionism is over; but he is in deadly personal rivalry with Mr. Lewis, and in any case would be unable to influence the policy and tactics of his colleagues in the Federation. They are a close bureaucratic body driven by a motive of self-interest as obvious as it is human. They stand by a structure of privileged unionism into which has been built the effort and class-interest of two generations; they are at the head of a continental organization with strong local interests, wide powers and large patronage. And their adherence to the scheme of the old Federation is strengthened by a deep-rooted fear of the later immigrants and the disruptive European ideas which they are assumed to have brought with them. Or, to put this aspect of the matter into a sentence: there is no organization in the world more interpenetrated than the Federation with hatred and fear of

Marxism, and of even the milder forms of Social Democracy. The A.F. of L. was an outgrowth of the abounding and individualist America in which the great industries were created before 1900.

The central figure of this momentous struggle is and must be John L. Lewis, the miners' leader. He is the son of a Welsh miner in Iowa, and was born in that State 56 years ago. The elder Lewis was a foundation member of the United Mine-Workers and suffered for his activity in the union. His sons, brought up in the house of a blacklisted miner, went into the pit to support the family, and John worked in many American fields, east and west. His training was of the toughest; he was known from the beginning as a hard unionist, always in the battle and always building and tightening the machine. One sympathetic observer says: "He never hesitated to win first and be fair afterwards; or rather, in a fight he is fair to what he wants to achieve rather than to the person of his opponent." His career as a union organizer has coincided with the advance of the United Mine-Workers, over which he has presided since 1919. The use he made of this position gave him a prominence in the world of American Labour which, during the past fifteen years, he has shared with only one other organizer and leader, Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Garment Workers, who is today his strongest ally in the drive towards industrial unionism.

John L. Lewis is a recent convert to this policy. Until the beginning of the Roosevelt period he held the orthodox tenets of the A.F. of L., although it was recognized that from the date of an important mine-wages agreement (Jacksonville, 1927) he was gradually breaking away from his old bearings. It was a combination of the Roosevelt policy, the regulating Codes, and Section 7A which brought about his complete acceptance of industrial unionism, and in the A.F. of L. convention of 1934 he announced his conversion. At that meeting his influence secured the passage of a resolution authorizing the Executive Council to organize inclusive unions in three industries—automobiles, cement and aluminium—and to encourage the industrial unions already existing in certain individual plants. But the A.F. of L. oligarchy had no intention of acting upon these instructions, and at the annual convention of 1935 Lewis was

the leader of open insurgency with at least one-third of the affiliated unions at his back. This advance of the miners' leader since the Jacksonville compromise is significant mainly for two reasons. It has carried him into close association with the progressives and radicals of the Labour movement, who were opposed to him for many years, and it has revealed him as the most resourceful and dynamic Labour leader of his generation. Since the beginning of the great depression seven years ago the world of American Labour has been deplorably confused and lacking in national leadership. The rapid emergence of John L. Lewis in his new character and the firmly directed energy of the C.I.O. have made a decisive difference in the atmosphere and the outlook.

There can be no doubt as to the region in which the first great trial of strength will come. All America is watching Pittsburgh and the other steel centres of Pennsylvania, for it is perfectly well understood that Lewis and the C.I.O. must take up the challenge of the great steel corporations, representing an industry estimated to stand for £1,000 millions, the most concentrated system of industrial feudalism in the modern world. The steel industry has been implacably opposed to trade unionism. The employers have been victors in every strike. In the annals of American Labour there is no more bitter memory than that of Homestead, 1892, when after a fatal shooting affair a strike organized by a powerful craft union was hopelessly beaten and the Carnegie Steel Company announced that never again would a union worker be employed in its mills. The forty-fourth anniversary of this disaster was celebrated last July, when a meeting at Homestead carried a new declaration of independence, affirming a resolve of exercising the "inalienable rights to organize into a great industrial union, banded together with all one's fellow steel-workers." An oath to this effect was taken in the cemetery where the victims of 1892 were buried, this being the first Labour rally in the town since the tragedy which put Homestead on the map. The answer of the steel corporations to the new menace could have been predicted. On the eve of the Homestead demonstration the Iron and Steel Institute circulated a defensive statement in the form of a full-page advertisement printed in 375 newspapers throughout the

United States, costing, it is said, \$500,000. It contained several important statements, and two in particular: (a) That "no employee in the steel industry has to join any organization to get or hold a job," and (b) that the overwhelming majority of the employees "recently participated in annual elections under their own representation plan, and elected their own representatives for collective bargaining." (This second point refers to the regular procedure of the company unions which, in steel and automobiles as in most other leading industries, came into existence under the shadow of the N.R.A., were blessed by President Roosevelt and accepted, or at least tolerated, by the A.F. of L.) The manifesto continues: "The steel industry will oppose any attempt to compel its employees to join a union or pay tribute for the right to work"; it will use all its resources "to protect its employees and their families from intimidation, coercion and violence, and to aid them in maintaining collective bargaining free from interference from any source."

Labour takes this as a virtual declaration of war, the declaration that must always be expected in reply to any move of militant Labour. Mr. Lewis's reply was delivered over the air, at the invitation, it is interesting to note, of Mr. David Sarnoff, president of the Radio Corporation of America, a large body of whose workers had been on strike under Lewis's own leadership. The Labour leader's language in this speech had the full note of passion that belongs to him in the present campaign. He asserted that the record of the steel corporations during the past thirty-five years showed failure to pay even a bare subsistence wage. He argued that when the leaders of the industry speak of protecting labour, they mean that union meetings will be broken up by hired hoodlums and that the industry intends to continue "the unlawful ruthless tactics of former years." There is, it may be noted, evidence enough to support the view of Lewis and his associates as to the completeness of the preparation for civil war in the steel cities. They allege an increased force of recognized gunmen and of spies in the plants, with additional supplies of ammunition and tear-gas, and a tightening of the control by the steel corporations over the municipalities, the law officers, the landlord interests and the stores throughout

the region. This is all in the tradition of Pennsylvania and Ohio; the facts are common property and are everywhere accepted. Lewis and the C.I.O. are resolved upon a planned crusade of industrial unionism, first in the steel cities and then in the motor-car and rubber centres and the industrial chiefs, with their stupendous resources, are committed to a policy of unlimited resistance. The prospect is extraordinarily grim.

There are two matters of importance, in particular, to be considered with respect to the disturbing forces that have taken shape during the past year. The first is the political aspect: what effect is the disruption of Labour likely to have upon the presidential election, and in particular upon the President's chances of re-election in November? The Roosevelt industrial policies have contained little save disappointment for the multitude of American wage-earners. The N.R.A. was unworkable and unconstitutional. Its Labour clause proved to be of no avail. The employer class as a whole was enabled to maintain its hostility to trade unionism. The Open Shop is, as much as ever, hailed as an immutable principle; the struggle for the right of collective bargaining must begin again. Moreover, since the collapse of the N.R.A., 1934-5, there has been a widespread and distressing decline in wages and labour conditions generally. Will not these things, coupled with the Labour schism, tell heavily against the President and the Democratic Party? They may, but hitherto the forecasts have on the whole been the other way. From the beginning of the election campaign organized Labour has been overwhelmingly for Mr. Roosevelt, with the A.F. of L. taking a much more positive party stand than it is accustomed to take. Mr. Lewis and the Labour Non-Partisan League are unequivocally Rooseveltian, and it is reasonable to calculate that the full weight of organized Labour, both conservative and radical, will be thrown into the scale against the combination of irresponsibles making up Mr. Lemke's ramshackle third party. The doubt, however, lies here: Mr. Green and the A.F. of L. officials are animated by a ferocious animosity towards Lewis and the C.I.O., and it is by no means impossible that large numbers of their followers, reversing their earlier attitude, may turn with impassioned resentment to Governor Landon and the Republicans.

And the second question provoked by the unprecedented situation of this year is concerned with the certainty of an embittered general war between Capital and Labour, a prospect made all the more terrifying by the split in the Labour forces. American employers as a class are immovable in their resistance to unionism, notwithstanding the high repute of the four great Railroad Brotherhoods and the admirable record of pacific negotiation in the garment trades. It is upon the Open Shop that the employers stand, as a principle of Americanism ; and in their view the Open Shop means, wherever possible, the factory closed to all holders of a union membership card. In the great mass-production industries—headed by steel, automobiles, rubber, radio—this basic hostility has hardened into a deep fanaticism, which is resentful of all argument or inquiry and, within the bounds of industrial feudalism, is taken as justifying every measure of defence and every device, however raw, for beating off the union organizer and destroying the agencies through which he works. Thus it is, after the abortive N.R.A. as through the anarchic post-war years, that the industrial regions have presented a continuous spectacle of civil war, whether latent or patent. Pennsylvania and West Virginia, Ohio and New Jersey, Illinois, Michigan and a dozen other States have by turns broken into the news with fresh disclosures of the irrepressible conflict. The outlook is ominous, especially because of the gathering evidence that the great corporations are preparing for a fight to a finish, and of the note of new and stern militancy that has been sounded by John L. Lewis ; while we may count it especially regrettable that the United States should be moving towards industrial warfare just as it becomes possible to believe that the American business revival is a genuine and powerful tide. Recovery ought at the least to mean internal peace.

THE ISOLATION OF THE INTELLECTUALS

BY LORD ELTON

THE Jubilee was the end of an epoch, the end of "post-war." Or rather, it was a lightning flash, suddenly and pitilessly revealing the tremendous but unacknowledged gulf which had long divided the mass of the nation from a few thousand "intellectuals," that small and spiritually alien community which had succeeded in stamping the post-war epoch with its own shabby, depressing and—as was now plain for all to see—altogether untypical characteristics. (Clearly only a minority of intellectual persons are "intellectuals." We do not think of the great doctor, the great teacher, even the great artist as "intellectuals"; presumably because first-rate creative work needs emotion, intuition, will-power even more than intellect. "An intellectual" is a man who has too much intellect in proportion to these other qualities; too much intelligence and too little character. He is a man who *thinks* of himself as an intellectual.) For the intellectual of your true post-war vintage, cynical, defeatist, rational, complex, and amoral, the natural reaction to last year's celebrations, founded as they were upon the simple emotions and the simple virtues—which even included patriotism—was that cultivated and supercilious titter which, ever since Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*, had been the dominant post-war note. The volume and quality of popular emotion, together with the sudden sense of their own spiritual isolation, astonished and silenced the intellectuals for the moment. Only here and there a revealing comment betrayed the lonely Martian visitor among human beings. The men and women who have been stamping that dreary decade and a half with its character have been in truth as isolated, as untypical, as spiritually alien to the masses as that pundit of the *New Statesman* who, finding himself among the cheering crowds, selected as the sight that impressed him most

with such symbolic fitness, "a road-cleaner who was kept busy raking the dung left by the horses!"

We still think of the Restoration as an age of dissolute cynicism; but who gave it that character? A small court clique in London at a time when the tastes and morals of nine Englishmen out of ten were neither worse nor better than those of their fathers or their children. The squire, the burgess and the labourer were no more rakes under Charles the Second than their counterparts in the nineteen twenties were cynical and pessimistic amorologists. It may be that enough "post-war" literature will survive to brand us as Rochester and his friends have branded the sixteen sixties. But at least let us recognize that our post-war spokesmen have been speaking scarcely even for a hundredth part of us; that they have been the men, so to speak, who had eyes only for the muck-raker, while the rest of the nation were busy applauding the procession.

In a sense there must always be a gulf between a nation and its men of intellect. But in normal times and when the nation is healthy, among men of intellect there are not many intellectuals, and it is a gulf only of degree, not of kind. Shakespeare feels more deeply and understands more profoundly than his less gifted contemporaries, but he is essentially—that indeed is the core of his greatness—a man of like passions with themselves. But ours have not been normal times. Even before 1914 it was an age of intellectuals. The war and its gloomy aftermath set up unique moral and emotional stresses, and to these the intellectual, being more sensitive, was more apt to succumb. The tiny but vocal community of the highbrows has been haggard by neuroses from which the bulk of the community has fortunately been free. The gulf has been one of kind as well as of degree.

And there have been special circumstances. The war, after all, saw the exaltation of the intellectual's antithesis, the man of action and, be it added, of discipline. In normal times it is not difficult for the intellectual to ignore or despise the unreflecting citizen who does the everyday work of the world. Travelling on the 9.40, or administering the Punjab, he is seldom conspicuous in the headlines, and his solid but unexciting virtues neither intrude nor irritate. But in war-time all is

changed. The man of action rules the world. He is saviour and hero at once. The man of theories is nowhere. And soon he envies—and despises—an unhealthy frame of mind. Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* was the supreme manifesto of your disgruntled intellectual in war-time. Published in the last year of the war it instantly achieved success. For the eminent persons whom it set itself to "debunk"—Arnold, Gordon, Florence Nightingale—represented precisely the type under whose temporary dominance the intellectual had been fretting. They were men and women who believed in something; and who had achieved something. Their lives had been lives of courage, discipline, and action. Let them be debunked! And so *Eminent Victorians* is one prolonged, discreet, sophisticated and, it must be confessed, often somewhat tedious, titter. It set the fashion for its epoch. For nearly two decades the literature of the titter reigned supreme. In *Queen Victoria* and *Elizabeth and Essex* Strachey repeated the same recipe and achieved, in varying degrees, the same success. For these works are not in essence a study of the full-blooded and active lives of those whose names appear on their title-pages. In the last analysis they are admiring self-portraits of the artist by himself: the central theme being always, "How amusing that Victoria, that Elizabeth, should not have possessed the same tastes in art or morals as a Cambridge intellectual of the nineteen twenties." So positive were the nineteen twenties that they had achieved the ultimate wisdom. As was perhaps natural, since they were so ready to make fun—was it not their *leitmotif*?—of all who had acted, dared, or believed; which is to say of almost all great figures and of almost every age. Outside the narrow confines of the intelligentsia, however, the general public was far from entertaining the same views. It read Strachey and his countless imitators for their entertainment value, where they possessed any, but usually without accepting their singularly unimaginative historical and ethical standards.

The same gulf between intellectual and public may be detected perhaps in the curious divergence of their attitudes to the public schools. A student of intelligent British fiction a hundred years hence, if he had no other evidence, might well conclude that the public schools were objects of almost universal

derision and dislike among their own clientele. For the public schools traditionally emphasize character, discipline, leadership, and co-operation, precisely those war-time virtues against which the intellectuals were in revolt; and it was only natural that among them "the old school tie" should have become the equivalent of the music-hall comedian's mother-in-law as a gag, certain to provoke its mechanical response. Yet while fiction was presenting the public schools as almost invariably odious or ridiculous to their own pupils, they were in fact full to overflowing, and one of the most remarkable social phenomena of the time was the readiness of former members to make huge economic sacrifices to send their sons to the same schools as themselves. For the general public is far from sharing the dislike of the intellectual for the emphasis placed by the public schools upon what may be called the war-time, though they are certainly also the peace-time, virtues of discipline, leadership, and co-operation.

In other ways, too, the gulf between the intellectuals and the nation has primarily been due to the war. For the war not only left the intellectuals in a specially neurotic condition; it left both them and the nation faced with appalling problems of reconstruction. The intellectual too often found an all-embracing defeatism the line of least resistance. While ordinary men and women were getting on with their own immediate tasks—rebuilding a business, organizing a Women's Institute or a branch of the League of Nations Union—the intellectuals were mostly prophesying disaster, either in the comprehensive form of what is usually described as "the end of European civilization" or in the analogous variant of some political Utopia which could only be reached by way of a catastrophic revolution. For the intellectual mere reconstruction was at once too arduous and too dull. And it was natural that, when the National Government was formed with overwhelming, and indeed unparalleled, public support, in 1931, the intellectuals should have been found, almost to a man, in the anti-national camp. For the avowed object of that Government was the painful process of reconstruction; moreover, it had expressly rejected any and all comprehensive theories, so dear to the heart of the highly rational intelligentsia, for the basis of its work, and had appealed

to the country for a doctor's mandate, in other words, for blind trust in empirical and largely intuitive leadership.

Defeatism was but one aspect of the general assumption of British intellectuals that British society was in a state of decadence. And here the innate defeatist instinct was powerfully reinforced by foreign influences. In a recent work, *The Destructive Element*, Mr. Stephen Spender attributes the discovery of this collapse (as it appears to him) to the American, Henry James, and singles out among James' principal disciples Eliot and Joyce, an American and an Irishman. Inspired by these alien prophets the intellectuals readily confused Continental with British conditions, and attributed to the British people symptoms of moral decay which existed perhaps amongst the British intelligentsia but certainly did not exist in the British nation as a whole. What reader of the highbrow fiction of the post-war epoch has not found himself having fumblingly to acquire the conventions of an unknown country, a world on whose threshold all the customs of the world he lives in must be deliberately forgotten? As Tolstoy said of philosophy, once you accept its assumptions and acquire its jargon it makes sense—until you try to fit the picture to the world as you know it. The real world, of course, contains the pervert, the promiscuous and the pessimist. Only it does not contain anything like so many. Compare the population of Mr. Aldous Huxley's fascinating works with your own neighbours and relations, and the contrast between reality and fiction becomes almost uncanny. Mr. Huxley explains, it is true, that the novel of ideas has necessarily to deal with characters who are interested in ideas, and that these are not more than about 0.5 per cent. of the population. His novels in fact may well be a faithful picture of the post-war intelligentsia. Let anyone who is acquainted with a good many different spheres of British life reflect for a moment how grotesquely dissimilar is the picture to anything he has encountered elsewhere. Mr. Huxley's novels, and those of his numerous imitators, are one more illustration, and an admirable one at that, of the isolation of the intellectual. But nine-tenths of post-war art is redolent of that isolation. At what other period have the works of almost all the artists most admired by the intelligentsia been meaningless, as during this period, not merely to the man in the street (who

applauded Shakespeare and read Dickens, Scott, and even Hardy) but even to highly-educated, but uninitiated, persons making deliberate and repeated efforts to comprehend?

In a highly characteristic post-war work Mr. Leonard Woolf has recently attributed all our troubles to a departure from rationalism. And it was perhaps the irrational in the Jubilee manifestations which above all else affronted the intellectual. But, the truth is, we English have never been rational, and all our greatest achievements, from poetry to politics, have been securely founded in the irrational and intuitive. It was intuition, the habit of dealing with facts when they arise (instead of preparing a rigid theoretical framework in advance, into which the facts must fit) which built a political history that has made the man in the street more comfortable in England today than in any other country in the world. We have felt our way by the instinctive common sense of the normal man, when we might have followed the rigid theories of some intellectual down the primrose path to bloodshed, arson, and the tightened belt with half the Continent of Europe. Five-Year Plans and New Deals seem to succeed only in so far as they diverge into "deviations" (to use a Russian euphemism) from their pre-conceived rigidities. Some "planning" there must be, but "planning," long-distance all-embracing "planning," has been the pastime of the intellectual rather than the motive power of British politics. Far more characteristic of the British method has been the successful appeal, in 1931, and, in effect, in 1935, for a doctor's mandate—a vote of confidence not in an elaborate programme (such as *Labour and the Nation*, written by Mr. R. H. Tawney for Labour politicians like Lord Snowden, who subsequently confessed that they had never read it), but in a number of leaders and the general direction in which they declared that they intend to advance. Unlike the intellectuals, the general public neither distrusts leadership nor cares much for elaborate plans. It knows that in a rapidly changing world whatever rulers it selects will have to move by sight and instinct as much as by any map. Napoleon used to say that, when asked what goal he was aiming at, "I always answered that I simply did not know." And great artists have mostly confessed the same; "that pre-existent vision does not pre-exist at all," wrote C. E. Montague: "It

only comes into existence while the technical and physical work of painting or writing goes on." Artist and statesman alike feel their way. And the British public has been content to have it so ; this indeed has been the essence of the British genius for politics.

Since then there have been signs in increasing number that we are indeed moving in a new era. The doctrine of class war is dead. There was even a moment at the end of last summer when it looked as though Mr. Baldwin, had he chosen to make the venture, might have reconstituted a National Government on a far wider basis of unity. In face of the Italian escapade the foreign policy of Government and Opposition was identical. At the Trades Union Congress (where there are no intellectuals) Mr. Bevin had offered to co-operate with the Government in drastic action in the distressed areas. On the chief domestic and foreign issues Government and Opposition, it seemed, could have united. The opportunity, if it was an opportunity, was not taken ; but that posture of affairs was significant. It was closely followed by a General Election at which the National Government won a second victory, in its way as striking and unprecedented as that of 1931. And, if it be asked why this should be evidence of the release of the nation from "post-war" shackles, the answer must be : "Read the highbrow weeklies"—not the Sunday weeklies, for these are national papers in the sense that they reflect some facet or other of the mind of the nation as a whole, but those Friday or Saturday journals, aptly described as the critical weeklies, on which has been laid the skeleton hand of the esoteric public of the fifty thousand or so of intellectuals for whom they cater—read these, and reflect how alien to all they stand for has been the political conception twice overwhelmingly endorsed by the nation. Already their pages "date" as unmistakably as an antimacassar. I hazard the prophecy that during the next decade we are likely to find in them a gradual reorientation, a gradual acclimatisation to the larger air which the nation is already breathing. During the next few years they will gradually, and for the most part unconsciously, learn that doctrinaire Socialism is as dead as Victorian individualism, and that, under their very noses, the nation, ignoring the text-books and groping its way intuitively

through one problem after another, is evolving an economic structure which is neither Russian Marxism nor American Individualism, but an insular hybrid of its own, destined, it may be, to be as widely imitated as was our Parliamentary constitution in the nineteenth century.

Even in fiction there is evidence that the intellectuals are tentatively following, in the wake of the nation, into the new era. In Mr. Huxley's latest novel, *Eyeless in Gaza*, it is fascinating to watch the author rediscovering one after another by his own elaborately rational processes the simple truths which plain men have accepted instinctively for generations. Re-stated in Mr. Huxley's highly personal idiom and with many characteristically diverting trimmings, the essential theme of the book is that of a child's Bible reader—be good and you will be happy. . . . It is indeed a far cry from *Antic Hay*. And where Mr. Huxley leads there seems little doubt that the intellectuals, who have followed before, will follow him again.

LORD PONSONBY, AND SOME MEMORIES

BY ARTHUR MOORE

LORD PONSONBY is the cause of this article, but he and his pacifism stir memories which, if not on the point, are, I trust, closely beside it. I hate to confute him out of his own mouth, but I must do it. For sleeping lately in a sweet field of memory something came to me out of a far past. Can it be that I am an old man and about to join the veteran regiment of the reminiscence vendors? No, not that—not yet. Just for this once.

Long ago—let me be brave and say thirty-two years ago—I started life, fresh from the home of lost causes, as the Secretary of the Balkan Committee. I was fired into the job by two Canons, very dissimilar but both marvellous, one of St. Paul's, and one of Westminster, Scott Holland and Barnett. They were enthusiasts and mistook me for something I was not, for I was really pretty worthless, and any merit I have has been painfully acquired through the years. Noel Buxton, now Lord Noel-Buxton, was the Chairman, and, I think, for all his sweetness of disposition he sized me up pretty well. But he thought a lot of the two Canons and he took me on. They gave me four pounds a week, and to keep in touch with Canon Barnett I lived at Toynbee Hall in Whitechapel. Not that there was anything clerical about me, unless it be the fact that I was a parson's son; a year later in the Balkans I came across a proverb that "the parson's son is the devil's grandson!" It was, so to speak, an accident that my two backers were parsons, and for that matter there was very little of the cleric about Samuel Barnett.

In Toynbee Hall—where letters from America used to arrive addressed to T. Hall, Esq.—I slept, and for two years spent about half my evenings in the East End. At Toynbee we residents were municipally-minded but otherwise gay. The late Henry Ward of the L.C.C. was the life and soul of the party.

W. H. Beveridge (now Sir William) and R. H. Tawney were a pair of inseparables. Beveridge had just created Labour Exchanges, and catching the infection we all talked about seasonal unemployment and studied graphs and things. Henry Lewis was a great favourite, whom we all, I think, regarded as a purely lay Jew ; to our astonishment he later became a Grand Rabbi. George Lansbury used to blow in for debates about Poor Law Guardians, and Henry Nevinson, Cyril Jackson, and Edward Garnett were fairly frequent visitors.

To get to the Balkan Committee—it seems time to get back to it—I became “a twopenny-bus young man,” and for that sum every morning travelled, if possible in the front seat above the driver’s hat, in a two-horse bus from Aldgate Pump past the Bank and St. Paul’s down Ludgate Hill and Fleet Street to Adam Street, Strand. There descending I marched to the house of Mr. Bernard Shaw, No. 10 Adelphi Terrace. The executive of the Balkan Committee consisted of a clerk who had a beautiful Adam room all to himself on the left as you go in. On the first floor I had the corresponding room complete with fireplace, as the brothers Adam had left it. On the other side of the staircase landing the New Reform Club had the dining-room on the ground floor and drawing-room above, the latter with the Angelica Kauffmann ceiling. Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Shaw—our landlords—occupied the other floor. During my four and a half years in Adelphi Terrace G.B.S. passed the time of day to me regularly when we met on the stairs, but only once or twice did he take part in our Balkan discussions. He was not a member, but was willing to drop into an invitation meeting in the drawing-room to tell us we were wasting our time. In 1907 his Balkan play, *Arms and the Man*, was produced at the Savoy, by Granville Barker with Lillah McCarthy, Auriol Lee, and James Hearn as stars, and on the strength of having lent James Hearn a pair of slippers and a peasant’s homespun costume which I had brought back from Bulgaria, Hearn called me in to the rehearsals as a (very pseudo) expert. I was much impressed by the way G.B.S. had got the sense of the Balkans.

Our President, till he became a Cabinet Minister, was James (afterwards Lord) Bryce, after which Professor Westlake succeeded him. But the President was not a regular attendant,

and the driving force as well as the principal financial supporter was Noel Buxton. Round him he had collected a varied assortment of people on a fairly small committee. They attended regularly and were very keen, but it was chiefly Noel Buxton that drew them there—Roden Buxton, Arthur Ponsonby, Henry Nevinston, G. P. Gooch, Bertram Christian, H. J. Torr, Sir Edward Boyle—and H. N. Brailsford, fresh from the Balkans and still a Liberal, are names of some regular attendants that come back to me. Sometimes Charles Masterman would breeze in, and in the early days Gilbert Chesterton would shake a meeting with a mixture of pleasurable excitement and alarm when his step was heard on the stair, preluding an eruption of paradox and laughter that disconcerted earnest workers like Aneurin Williams.

What, you may well ask, were we trying to do? The more I think of it, the more I see how like the present League of Nations Union was our self-imposed task. They now talk of Article XIX of the Covenant, and so on. Our business was to try to get the Powers to take some notice of Article XXIII of the Treaty of Berlin. That was our stand-by. Their League of Nations was our Concert of Europe, in practice an idealistic failure, just like the League. Turkey was in several ways the prototype of Abyssinia today. By the Treaty of Paris in 1856, after the Crimean War, Turkey had been admitted to the League—I mean the Concert. In Article V the Powers declared “the Sublime Porte admitted to participate in the advantages of European Public Law and the European Concert.” By Article XXIII of the Treaty of Berlin the Sublime Porte undertook to introduce into Turkey in Europe (i.e., Macedonia, Albania, and Thrace) laws similar to the Cretan organic law of 1868, with adaptation to local conditions. Local Commissions were actually appointed to frame statutes and regulations for the government of the vilayets, but no laws were ever promulgated. After the Macedonian insurrection of 1903 and the massacres which accompanied its suppression the Balkan Committee was created to bring pressure on the British Government to lead the Concert of Europe to press the Porte for the fulfilment of Article XXIII.

Most of the active members of the Committee had first-hand knowledge of the Balkans. My own ignorance I set out to

mitigate, and for four years in succession I succeeded in appointing myself as a Correspondent for English papers during my summer holidays. In the last of these years, 1908, I had by chance a virtual monopoly for the London press of the Young Turk Revolution in Macedonia, and this proved a turning-point in my life.

Incidentally, Enver Bey (later he was a Pasha) became my friend, and, thanks to his introductions to Albanian tribal chiefs who had relations with the Young Turk Committee, I succeeded that summer in passing through Central Albania on a basis of blood brotherhood. That part of the country had been absolutely closed to Europeans. Turkey-in-Europe in those days was not considered by its own inhabitants as part of Europe, and to them we were Franks (Feringhi), quite distinct both from Mussulmans and from the *rayot giaïours*, the Christian subjects of the Sultan, i.e., Serbs, Greeks, Bulgars and Kutso-Vlachs. Dibra had had at least one traveller, Mr. Sackville-West, of the Ottoman Debt, but beyond that no one had penetrated Westward to Mat. Thanks to my Young Turk friends I rode by Katchanik to Bourgayet, the centre of the Mat country, where the feudal Bey, Jelal, entertained me with Homeric hospitality in a Homeric castle. A sheep was roasted in my honour, and the small son of the house carried round a great dish and knelt before me at intervals to tempt me to fresh efforts. This small boy was called Zog, and he is now the King of Albania. I believe that I was the first *pukka* European His Majesty ever set eyes upon. From Mat I was passed on to equally unknown Kthela, and from Kthela to Orosh, the centre of Mirdita, thence to Kasanjeti, and so to Scutari. From there I travelled inland again through better known country, Jakova, Ipek, Mitrovitsa.

We were by way of being quite impartial about the Christian races of Macedonia, but the Greeks called us the Bulgar Committee, and the Serbs were very doubtful. Actually we were pro-Bulgar and were not as frank as we might have been about it. Admirable Miss Durham was the first of our group to discover the Serbs and the Albanians. Most of the rest of us were so impressed by Bulgarian stolidity that we were unduly suspicious of the Serb's flamboyant dash. The good quality of the Turks I began to appreciate in 1908.

Trying to get the Concert of Europe to take its stand on Article XXIII of the Treaty of Berlin was hard work. There was much the same unilateral disregard of Treaties in those days as there is now, and the language used was also much the same, though some fondly believe that something new is happening now in the way of cynicism. In 1871 the Russian Government suddenly denounced the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris. Bismarck told Odo Russell, later Lord Ampthill, our Ambassador in Berlin, that the Russian circular had taken him completely by surprise, and he "entirely disapproved the manner and the time selected by the Russian Government to force a revision of the treaty. At the same time he regretted that he could neither interfere nor even answer the circular officially in consequence of the [Franco-Prussian] War." In his Reminiscences, incidentally, he proved himself false by claiming credit for suggesting the *coup* to Russia and supporting her: "Prince Gortschakoff entered reluctantly upon the initiative with which I sounded him in this direction." Then as now the *fait accompli* remained, but the Concert at a conference in London (did anyone say Stresa?) sought to save its face by a Protocol which reaffirmed that it was an essential principle of the law of nations that no Power can repudiate treaty obligations or modify treaty provisions except with the consent of the contracting parties by friendly agreement. The Treaty of Berlin was later continuously ignored by Turkey, aided and abetted by Germany. That was one of the weaknesses of the Balkan Committee. Always it was against Germany that we bumped up, but our Left element would not recognize the significance of this. At a time when the world was ringing with indignation against Abdul Hamid for the events in Macedonia in 1903 the Kaiser, completely indifferent both to Germany's treaty obligations and to public opinion, stood ostentatiously aloof from the Concert's efforts, and, intent on his Baghdad Railway scheme and elated by valuable mining concessions in Thasos, declared himself the Sultan's friend.

Finally it was Austria that tore the Treaty of Berlin to shreds by unilateral action in October, 1908, and induced Bulgaria to act with her. Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Bulgaria declared itself an independent kingdom. The aged

Emperor Francis Joseph, who in his prime had always shown himself a man of honour, was thus led by Aehrenthal to perjure his country ; but again, of course, the *fait accompli* endured, and again there was the customary talk about the wickedness of jumping treaties without leave. On the day the annexation was announced Sir Edward Grey declared in a speech that " we cannot recognise the right of any Power or State to alter an international treaty without the consent of the other parties to it." Britain, France, Russia, and Italy made formal announcements in this sense. The Kaiser had lost ground at Constantinople by the revolution, but was already making love to the Young Turks. Nevertheless, he was also in with Austria and Bulgaria, and not at all interested in affirming the wickedness of violating treaties ; consequently Germany abstained. Yet nobody could persuade the British Liberals in those days that Germany was a danger to the peace of Europe. According to them, it was always, first, Lord Lansdowne, and later Sir Edward Grey, who had not done the right thing. War came for lack of plain speaking to Germany, and no one urged the Government to be blunt. If Cabinet Ministers had spent last summer telling Mussolini what the British people thought of his proposal to attack Abyssinia, instead of protesting in every speech their admiration for Italy and their respect for him, would we be where we are today ?

Under a definitely cold, not to say icy, exterior Lord Lansdowne concealed a warm heart, and he convinced us all that he really did feel both the point of honour and also the human tragedy of misgovernment in Macedonia. He had for his Under-Secretary, however, the late Earl Percy, son of the Seventh Duke of Northumberland, who was an ardent admirer of the Turks, and was responsible for introducing a dual strain into Foreign Office policy. When Sir Edward Grey succeeded Lord Lansdowne we had to deal with a younger and more accessible man, but rather to our surprise we found him at first much more cautious and reserved on the subject of the Balkans than Lord Lansdowne. But he warmed to his work, and, with the Committee egging him on, he faced the Concert in 1908 with proposals for an independent Governor-General of Macedonia (to be appointed for ten years), increased powers for an international gendarmerie, and a reduc-

tion of the Turkish garrison. These proposals, which virtually meant the end of Turkish rule, undoubtedly precipitated the Young Turk revolution. The Committee also, in so far as foreigners can play a part in such movements, had a share in the foundation of the Balkan League which dismembered Turkey-in-Europe in 1913. J. D. Bouchier, of *The Times*, was one of our keen sympathisers, and whenever he was in England he came to address us. He was regarded in Bulgaria as a kind of patron saint, and consequently in Greece as the devil. Pember Reeves, formerly High Commissioner for New Zealand, told me that when travelling in Greece he was nearly starved in a hotel at Corinth for some days, till he discovered that the waiters had mistaken him for Bouchier! But Bouchier had in Venizelos one staunch friend in Greece, and through Venizelos he played a great part in the making of the Balkan League.

Arthur Ponsonby was a keen member of the Balkan Committee. I can see him now sitting at the table in 10 Adelphi Terrace, with a smooth smiling face, fair hair and a light golden moustache. I was told he had been one of Queen Victoria's pages, and as that Sovereign had only recently died—much to my surprise, for I had grown up regarding her as eternal—I was the more impressed. Later I remember there was a row because King Edward, regarding him not unnaturally as part of his household, was annoyed by one of his speeches and crossed his name off the list for a garden-party at Buckingham Palace, to which the rest of the House of Commons was invited. Ponsonby retorted by vacating his royal lodgings, and I remember a luncheon when the problem of finding rooms for him near the House was set for discussion.

And now to the point of my story, after all this digression. Lord Ponsonby started life in the diplomatic service, and during the Armenian massacres in 1897 he was in the Embassy at Constantinople. Now, under another Article of the Treaty of Berlin, Number 61, the Concert of Europe was responsible for the Sublime Porte's undertaking to introduce "immediate" reforms into the provinces inhabited by Armenians and "to guarantee their security against the Circassians and Kurds." The young diplomat, as he subsequently told the Committee, was disgusted at the failure of the Concert of Europe to bring

the Sultan to book, the career lost its charm, and a few years later he resigned the Service. Each of the Embassies of the great Powers kept in those days a small gunboat, known as a *stationnaire*, in the Bosphorus. I remember that the British *stationnaire* was called the *Imogen*, and the German the *Lorelei*. And I well remember Lord Ponsonby telling us that all that was required, even if the other Powers had been unwilling actively to participate, was for the British *stationnaire* to train its guns on the Sultan's place, Yildiz Kiosk, and force him to accept a programme for the protection of the Armenians. Indeed, during practically the whole time that Lord Ponsonby was a member of the Committee, the efforts of the Committee were directed to a similar end. Our object was to get the Concert of Europe to force reforms in Macedonia upon the Sultan by means of a combined naval demonstration in other words, enforcement of the Treaty of Berlin by means of military coercion.

Thus, then, we have the fact that Lord Ponsonby resigned the diplomatic service largely because his country would not enforce military action. Now at a later stage he has resigned the leadership of his party in the House of Lords because it was not willing to oppose sanctions.

Perhaps Lord Ponsonby will admit the inconsistency, and will say that he has learnt a lot since those days which I recall, and that the War opened his eyes. It is a good answer, and leaves me with no further reply, except to say that I do not agree with him. The Christian precept of loving your enemy, if you can, and not resisting his violence seems to me a rule for the individual. The command to love your enemies—if you can—remains sound advice for a nation also, even in war-time. But to say that one is not to resist on behalf of the lives and property of others a collective violence applied in defiance of law is to me the same thing as saying that the police should be abolished. I once asked Mrs. Besant if she believed in Gandhi's teaching. "Of course not," she replied instantly, "it means chaos. He is a philosophical anarchist, and applies to a nation a morality meant for the individual." That was also the essential flaw in Tolstoy's teaching. Canon Sheppard, Mr. Lansbury, Lord Ponsonby and all of their way of thinking are, I submit, philosophical anarchists.

A BRITISH POPULAR FRONT ?

By A. L. ROWSE

TWO years ago, when the Liberal Summer School was last in Oxford, I put forward a plea for a Liberal-Labour understanding, the essential condition, in present circumstances, of a Progressive majority and a Progressive government in this country. Miss Megan Lloyd George, who took the chair, reinforced my plea with one of her own. We were not listened to : the attitude of the Liberal Summer School in 1934 was distinctly unfavourable, not to say hostile. I came away with the idea that the old gang who ruled what remains of the Liberal Party were by nature non-co-operators ; that they would not co-operate with anybody even to attain what they said they wanted ; that they were so hidebound in their own stale self-sufficiency—with their talk, at that time of day, of a Liberal majority sweeping the country—that, in fact, the non-co-operators in my own party were quite right, there was no dealing with them.

In the circumstances of the election of last year, a progressive alliance between Liberals and Labour might not have won a majority at the polls ; but at least the Conservatives would not have won the large majority they did, which enables them to conduct the affairs of the country with such irresponsibility. However, the blame lies equally upon the Liberal and Labour parties for not arriving at an understanding in time. There are non-co-operators and fossils on both sides.

Now that it is too late, there is a great deal more sympathy with the idea of some such understanding. There is an almost embarrassing amount of discussion about a Popular Front. It certainly embarrasses both the Liberal and Labour leadership. The lumbering official machine of the Labour Party discourages any dangerously vitalising influence such as that of Mr. Lloyd George. Really, when one observes these feeble maunderings, one wonders whether the Labour Party wants power.

But the Liberal leadership is no less embarrassed. Look at the speeches of Sir Archibald Sinclair, talking about an inde-

pendent Liberal majority at this time of day—a party which has seventeen seats in this House of Commons, and whose vote is declining, not increasing ! Or look at the correspondence in the *Manchester Guardian*, by Liberals who do not seem to realize that in the twentieth century—and we are now almost half way on in it—common sense demands that they should keep quiet.

It is quite clear that if any understanding comes about between Liberals and Labour, it will be as the result of the younger and more flexibly-minded elements taking the official leadership of their respective parties in the flank—or in the rear. After all, they have no mind to spend the rest of their lives in the wilderness, while Fascism wins victory after victory abroad and the whole position of the western democracies goes by default—just because their elders are an unconscionable time a-dying !

I gather that this year the whole balance of opinion at the Liberal Summer School was in favour of a Popular Front. How like politics that is : a year after the horse has bolted, to think of shutting the stable door. However, one must remember that in politics one is dealing very largely with the stupid. Which leads me to the very serious reflection that *if some form of effective democracy is to survive even, in present conditions, it needs to be a great deal more authoritative than most people in English politics realize.*

But—to the Popular Front ! Sir Walter Layton has given a magnificent lead, and the *News Chronicle* very generous expression, to this upsurge of opinion among the younger Liberals and Labour people in favour of an understanding. Sir Walter Layton said that he was in favour of a Popular Front, because the very forces of civilization are at stake. It is no more than the truth. The whole future of political and social progress hangs upon this issue between Fascism and the forces of the Left.

All hope of peace and social progress is bound up with the forces of the Left. Of peace, because only the parties of the Left believe fundamentally in “the possibility or desirability of universal peace”—to quote Mussolini’s phrase ; he has assured us that he does not, and has proved his assurance not merely with words, but with deeds. There is a more fundamental reason. There is no secure economic foundation, in the nature of the capitalist system, upon which international peace can be

built. Capitalism demands expansion, conflict, rivalry for profit, imperialist exploitation : all the seeds of modern war. Trying to build an international system without founding it upon the economic controls of a socialist order is like building a house upon the sands. Hence the collapse of the post-war edifice,—and all the illusory hopes—of Wilsonian Liberalism. Other causes, too, are essentially bound up with the Left : the liberation of the human mind from the nightmares and bogies of the superstitions of centuries ; the achievement of rational control ; the working out of economic justice and a functioning social equality.

Such are the causes that are dependent upon the issues of these conflicts in contemporary Europe. With all these great causes at stake, how can people be so small-minded, so obtuse, so parochial, as to refuse to collaborate for the achievement of these great ends, or even for their defence—at a time of such danger, when these causes, as after the long agony of the revolutionary struggles in the last century, are driven back to the Atlantic sea-board of Europe ?

What then, are the lines along which the forces of the Left may draw together in this country, attain greater cohesion and effectiveness in the struggle that impends ?

The demand for a Popular Front here, as abroad, has been most vociferous on the extreme Left, from the Communists. Indeed, in France they form a very important part of it, and with their eighty seats in the new Chamber, have made very great gains by it. It may be worth noting what a complete reversal of Communist policy this participation in a common front with Socialists and even Liberals amounts to. After years of making it their first aim and end to destroy social-democracy, and having succeeded in bringing about its complete destruction in Germany and Italy, these fanatics are now prepared to collaborate with anybody, not only the Labour Party but even with Liberals and progressives of the centre, in order to exorcise the spectre of Fascism which they more than anybody have raised up. Fortunately the question is not a serious one in this country ; for providentially, or perhaps owing to the sound common-sense of most of the British working-class, the Communists are no more than a handful of the electorate. Their total vote in the last Election was some 27,117 : that is, 13,655 votes in the

Rhondda Valley, where their candidate, the Communist leader, Mr. Pollitt, was beaten by the official Labour candidate ; and 13,962 votes in West Fife, where the Communist candidate, Mr. Gallacher, got in on a minority vote.

It is obvious that their electoral support is negligible. Indeed, the official Labour view is probably quite right in regarding Communist support, in our circumstances, as more embarrassing than useful. Any alliance that was made between the Labour Party and the Communists would be used on every Conservative platform to make the flesh of a susceptible electorate creep ; to the usual fraudulence of an electoral appeal to the British people there would be added a campaign of horrors that would sweep the Labour Party from the polls. I regard this as an altogether more cogent reason for rejecting the monthly, almost weekly, proposals of the Communist Party for affiliation to the Labour Party, than the differences of outlook and programme, dictatorship versus democracy, etc., etc., which the official leaders of the *Daily Herald* discern as reasons for rejection. For what do these things matter ? In politics, the essential consideration is power, and how to attain it.

Though these objections to any alliance of the Labour Party with the Communists hold good, there is no reason why, in the one or two areas where there is any Communist vote to speak of, there should not be local understandings regarding candidates. It would be generous on the part of the Labour Party not to oppose Mr. Gallacher in West Fife, in return for the Communists not putting up wrecking candidatures in other constituencies ; a similar arrangement might be made with regard to one seat in South Wales. One seat, or at most two, in the House of Commons would hardly do any harm, and would allow just the right representation to Communism in relation to its importance in this country.

The position with regard to the I.L.P. is similar, though it affects a few more seats. Nothing could exceed the stupidity of the line taken up by the I.L.P. since 1931. There is much to be said for the view that the I.L.P. mentality, with its unpleasant mixture of a sentimental unrealism, an unparalleled self-righteousness, a futile idealism and an absolute refusal to face the facts of politics, is fundamentally perverted. At least the Com-

munists think so—and who am I to intervene in these mutual endearments ?

It could have been foretold what would have been the consequence of the disaffiliation of the I.L.P. from the main body of the Labour Party—I myself foretold it. The I.L.P. itself split into two ; and the more useful and intelligent half of it, the co-operators as opposed to the non-co-operators, found their way back into the Labour Party. Mr. Maxton continues to lead the rump of his Party—or rather follows it—until, in fact, there is hardly any party left to lead. Four seats they won at the last election, all in the Glasgow area—of which one was subsequently lost to them. They therefore now amount to three members in the House of Commons, where their behaviour has been so motivated by pique and resentment against the Labour Movement that any and every occasion has been seized by them to hamper the work of the Labour Party in the House. The general principle for the Labour Movement to adhere to, in relation to both the I.L.P. and to the Communists, is that the Labour Party is the main mass-movement of the working-class, and that if they wish to work effectively for the working-class, their place is within that Movement and not outside it. The Labour Party is itself a United Front ; there is plenty of room within it for divergencies of outlook, for all sorts of differing contributions to the common cause, without allowing each handful of people afflicted with minority-mindedness, or political sectarianism, to form their own particular little group or party as an expression of their own unpleasant little egoism. The place of the whole working-class is within the Labour Movement ; those people who are engaged in holding them outside in group-formations of their own, or confusing their minds by a divided appeal to their loyalty, are guilty of a crime against the working-class.

It will readily be seen that the question of a Popular Front does not necessarily mean an understanding between the Labour Party and these groups on the Left. To Labour, they are but groups and not Parties. There is no question of three equal parties entering into an agreement. What is appropriate to the case of the I.L.P. as to that of the Communists, is not so much an agreement as to policy between equals, as local understandings in regard to Parliamentary seats. The Labour Party could here

also afford to be generous and agree not to put up candidates against those three Glasgow members who still remain with the I.L.P.

But the really essential part of a Popular Front in this country has nothing to do with this. It is concerned rather with the Liberal Party and whether a Liberal-Labour understanding can be reached. That would be worth having : it would be not merely a superfluous bargain with a few recalcitrant and fissiparous groups on the Left ; it would be an understanding between two parties, independent of each other and separate from each other. That would be a Popular Front, an understanding between the progressive parties. It would be a matter of outstanding political importance if achieved ; it would remake the political map of this country.

For, it must be remembered, there has hardly at any time since 1918 been a purely Conservative majority in Great Britain. The long years of Conservative ascendancy have been due to the progressive forces being split in two, and worn down in a process of attrition one upon the other. In spite of the absolute Conservative majorities obtained in the conditions of the fraudulent elections of 1931 and 1935, it is doubtful whether there is still a Conservative majority in the country. The balance has been held by a large fluctuating mass of votes in the centre, which the Conservative Party managed to panic in 1931, and to shepherd the right way in 1935. The responsibility for this state of affairs is very largely that of the Liberals. But the Liberal Party has itself been divided from top to bottom between Right and Left, between Asquith and Lloyd George, and then between the Simonites and the Samuelites. The virtual incorporation of the supporters of Sir John Simon, the National Government Liberals, into the body of Conservatism, has at any rate cleared the air. So long as the official Liberals looked to the re-union of the Simonites with the main body of the Party, there was no hope of an understanding with Labour. That was the position under the leadership of Sir Herbert Samuel in the last Parliament ; but with the new Parliament, the obvious futility of any hope of the return of the Simonites to the fold, and under the leadership of Sir Archibald Sinclair, the way is clear for collaboration with the Labour Party. Actually in

this present Parliament, the collaboration between Liberals and Labour has been pretty consistent and successful : a contrast with the Parliament of 1931.

This augurs well for a future electoral understanding between the two parties. For it is that which is the essential condition of a Progressive Front in this country. No doubt it would need to be preceded by an understanding as regards policy—at any rate, as regards the objectives of the next five years. It is here that the Next Five Years Group of Sir Arthur Salter, Sir Walter Layton and others, may come to play a role of great importance. For it occupies a strategic position at the junction of the main bodies of Left opinion. The policy which is laid down in the book *The Next Five Years**, both as regards foreign policy and the extension of social progress at home, is one which could be subscribed to by most Liberals and Labour people. It may be that something like the policy of this group will come to be the platform upon which Liberal-Labour understanding can be built.

Of greater practical importance is the question of an electoral understanding. It is true that the support for Liberalism in the country at large has dwindled enormously from the five million votes recorded in 1929 ; since then it has split in two, and anyhow Liberalism is a declining force. But it happens that in certain backward areas, where the Labour Party has not yet effectively penetrated, there still remains a considerable Liberal vote. These areas are : (1), the South-Western Counties, (2) the Scottish Counties, (3) the Welsh Counties, with a certain number of county seats scattered here and there. Of course, it is unreasonable that these areas should continue even in part to be Liberal : the days of Liberalism are, in any effective sense, over and done with. They only continue to vote Liberal, because in fact they are so obstinately conservative ; the political influence of Nonconformity has also something to do with it. Nevertheless, concessions should be made to human unreason. Time presses ; and though no doubt, Liberalism will vanish from the political map in time—we are not far off it even now—the question is whether the end of defeating the present Government is not an overriding necessity.

* Macmillan.

One should not estimate the consequences of such a Liberal-Labour understanding merely in terms of the minority seats at present occupied by Conservatives, owing to three-cornered contests in which Liberal and Labour candidates by cancelling each other out, let in the Tory—though the unrepresentativeness of the electoral system in these conditions is altogether greater than people are aware of. Take the five South-Western Counties—Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset and Wilts. Here the votes cast in 1935 were roughly in the proportion of 5 Government to 4 Opposition votes : the totals were, for the Government, 459,958 ; against the Government, 379,227. Yet the result, in members returned to the House of Commons, was the scandalously unrepresentative one of 25 Government supporters, two Liberals, and not a single Labour member. The remedy for this state of affairs is not Proportional Representation—which would mean the end of parliamentary democracy in this country ; but a Liberal-Labour understanding. What is true of the South-Western area is true to a lesser extent of various other parts of the country.

But, as I have said, the full advantages of such an electoral alliance between the two progressive parties, would not be confined to merely a matter of a few seats gained here or there—though the figures of the last election show that a turn-over of only 5,000 votes, *in the circumstances of a Liberal-Labour understanding*, would give them a majority in Parliament. Its true importance would be psychological rather, political in the dynamic sense. It would shake both parties out of the stalemate they have got into ; it would re-make political contours : it would bring new forces, and new men, to the top in their respective parties—the co-operators, instead of the non-co-operators who have ruled in each so long, to the mutual sterilizing of both. Perhaps that is the reason why any effective move in this direction may be expected to come from the younger generation of Liberals and Labour people, rather than from the too-static leadership of both at the top.

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

BY RAY STRACHEY

HAVE women Members of Parliament been a success? In the rather pronounced reaction against "feminism" now current, many men and women give "No" as the answer to this question, and do so with a certain degree of satisfaction. Women members have made no difference, they say: they have produced no great statesmen, no leaders, no orators. They have initiated no great measures, carried no sweeping amendments, made no personal mark. They have not affected the issues of peace and war, nor remedied unemployment, nor even got into Parliament at all in any important numbers. They are no use and no good. There was nothing in the feminist case except a theory, now proved empty. It was all a great fuss about nothing.

The facts of the case cannot, of course, be in dispute. In the eighteen years since the passing of the Act which enabled women to be elected to the House of Commons thirty-four have been elected, one of whom (Lady Astor) has been a Member continuously all through, several have served in two or three Parliaments and the others only for one term. Of the thirty-four, fourteen have been elected as Conservatives, fourteen as Labour Members, four as Liberals, one as Independent and one (who did not take her seat) as an Irish Nationalist. One (Miss Bondfield, Labour) has held office as Minister of Labour with a seat in the Cabinet, and two (Miss Susan Lawrence, Labour, and the Duchess of Atholl, Conservative) have been junior Ministers, five have represented Great Britain as substitute delegates at the meetings of the Assembly of the League of Nations.

Numerically this is not an imposing record, nor is it possible to say that any of the individual women concerned have ranked either as outstandingly great statesmen or orators. In so far as

these facts go, those who say that the advent of women has not made a tremendous difference, and that women M.P.s have not been an overwhelming success in Parliament are unquestionably right.

But what are they looking for? The record of the thirty-four women is well above the average of any other random selection of thirty-four M.P.s elected for the first time since 1918, and what more or what different was to be expected? The notion that women would revolutionize the place, that they would be elected in great numbers, and would all instantly rise to the highest position was never a part of the feminist creed. Those who say that because women M.P.s have not as yet altered the traditions of the House of Commons, or established peace on earth, or produced any political giants, therefore they have failed are really assuming—no doubt unconsciously—an attitude about women far more feminist than the real thing. They are pitching expectation as high as if women were still on the old (imaginary) pedestals of Victorian thought. They are expecting from women some spectacular “special” contribution to public life. They are, in short, still taking the old “anti” position that women are not quite as human as men, and assuming, not that they are inferior, but that they are very noticeably more efficient, more intelligent and more powerful than the other sex. This assumption, moreover, carries a hint of the theory that women have a different approach from men’s approach to all human and political problems. It implies that once they have a small chink of opportunity in the political world they can be expected to clarify and reform the whole thing from end to end; and, when they delay to do this, it deduces failure.

This is to apply a very exacting standard to women, to be *plus royaliste que le roi*, and no genuine feminist has ever had such abnormally high expectations.

If these exaggerated ideas are set aside, and the doings of the thirty-four women who have in fact been elected to Parliament are considered, the record is interesting. Every one of the thirty-four has been genuinely interested in politics, trying to do her duty to her constituents and her country, and not going into Parliament to make money or a name for herself, or to push any private or business interest. Every one has worked hard,

doing her full share of the tedious work which is not in the lime-light, and devoting her main energies to her public work. So much could not be said of every other collection of thirty-four honourable members, for, as everyone knows, each House has a sprinkling of "tied" members, of self-interested members, of lazy members, and of absentees who—though of very small public utility—are sometimes returned to Westminster again and again.

The women members have not only shown themselves to have the solid virtues, but they have also contributed to the specialized knowledge which is such a remarkable feature of the House of Commons. No matter what subject comes up in debate there are always, among the 615 representatives of the people, some who know it at first hand; and to this service the women members have made their fair contribution. Many of them (as is natural) have spoken as experts on matters affecting children, and Lady Astor in particular can and does move, as well as entertain, the House when she speaks on these problems. Miss Lawrence was an acknowledged expert on local government—and how should she not have been, since she went to prison herself with the Poplar Guardians as part of their famous stand? Dr. Ethel Bentham had been a practising physician, Miss Pickford a factory inspector, Miss Wilkinson and Miss Bondfield trade union organizers, and Mrs. Wintringham and Mrs. Manning had been school teachers. Each knew her own line of country at first hand—as did Mrs. Ward, a practical farmer's wife, and Mrs. Hilton Phillipson (Mabel Russell the actress). Some of the *expertise* of the women M.P.'s has been rather unexpected, as when Miss Irene Ward revealed an inside knowledge of mining, and Mrs. Runge proved to be an owner of racing greyhounds: but all expert knowledge is in place in the House, since its law-making function reaches out to cover every aspect of daily life; and it might well be attributed as a failure to women if those who had been elected to go there turned out to have had no varied practical experience at all.

Those who look for a very noticeable change from the appearance of women in Parliament are not only making the psychological mistake of considering women as different in nature from men, but they are also making the political mistake of supposing

that all women think alike on public questions.

In the first years after the granting of woman suffrage politicians of all parties were exceedingly afraid of the appearance of a "woman party." They used anxiously to question the women's organizations about this possibility, and it was hard to persuade them that there was no such danger at all.

The very normal political behaviour of women voters has banished that bogey completely, and no one now thinks such a thing either practical or possible; but its ghost seems to haunt the minds of those who complain of a lack of cohesion among the women in Parliament.

In actual fact, of course, the women M.P.s are quite as widely separated from each other by difference of party and of political principles as any other section of the House. When the Labour Government was in office in 1929 Lady Astor made many biting attacks upon the Labour women members (and she knows that art very well), and was by them roundly trounced in return. The division of principle between the Duchess of Atholl and Miss Jenny Lee, for example, is as wide as between Lord Hugh Cecil and Mr. Maxton, and not in the least different in kind, and there is no reason to expect the first couple to pull together any more than the second. At the general election of 1931 women candidates opposed each other in a number of constituencies, and two sitting Labour M.P.s, Mrs. Manning (Islington E.) and Miss Bondfield (Wallsend) were defeated in straight fights by two Conservative women (Miss Cazalet and Miss Irene Ward), and in 1935 Miss Ward again defeated Miss Bondfield for the same seat.

All this—from the really feminist point of view—is perfectly healthy. It is the taking of a normal position on lines of principle and not of sex.

In spite of the party colours of the women M.P.s, however, they have at times combined to act together, and the cases when they have done so are significant. In the first ten years after 1919—when there were but a very small number of women in the House altogether—a large number of Acts directly affecting the civil rights and the legal position of women were passed. On each of these occasions the women M.P.s were generally in fundamental agreement. When there were only two in the

House, Mrs. Wintringham and Lady Astor (Liberal and Conservative though they were) stood firmly together on all these questions, and had the tide with them besides. Everyone was anxious in those years to put right the position of women; and an amazing volume of change went through. From guardianship to inheritance the laws were equalized, and in the same spirit the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the separation and maintenance orders and a score of other matters touching the lives of women as women were put through. During that spate of "woman's interests" legislation, such women M.P.s as there were acted closely together, only flying apart—as in duty bound—on true party divisions.

Since 1924, by which time most of the legislation of this sort was completed, there have been two outstanding occasions on which the women M.P.s have acted together almost as a solid body, throwing their party allegiances aside; and these occasions are interesting.

The first was in 1931, when Miss Bondfield, the Minister of Labour, introduced an Anomalies Bill which, among other things, imposed on married women who were insured a number of extra conditions before they could qualify for their unemployment benefit. On this occasion the majority of the other women in the House banded together to oppose these clauses, and they cared so much that they forced an all-night sitting. It was an unusual business for the small hours of a Parliamentary morning. One after another, and again and again, women M.P.s rose up to battle for the rights of insured married women. They battled against a woman Minister—and lost.

The second occasion was in 1932, when the National Government introduced a Bill on National Health Insurance, which again proposed special disabilities for married women workers. Once more almost all the women M.P.s banded together, irrespective of party. Once more they stuck hard to their point, and went in full deputation to the Minister of Health. Although on the reduction of benefit they were unsuccessful, they did get some important concessions on other points which went a long way to protect the threatened married women.

There is nothing surprising in any of this. In so far as women have been unfairly or exceptionally treated, women members

are bound to have a common interest in the improvement of the position. There—but only there—they have a natural and almost necessary bond of union. Everywhere else they must divide, just as men do, according to their political theory and faith.

While it is true that the fundamental similarity of men and women as citizens is the basis from which the performance of women M.P.s must be judged, it is also true that there is at present, and will be for one or two generations to come, some genuine justification for expecting special results from the election of women.

In the eighteen years which have passed since the Representation of the People Act a change which almost amounts to a revolution has taken place, not only in the legal status and formal rights of women, but in the general social attitude of men towards them and of women towards themselves. In the early months of the war the newspapers used sometimes to say that "the nation" was grateful to "the women"; today such a sentiment would be differently phrased, for no one is likely to forget that women are themselves a full half of "the nation." The change which a realization of this fact implies reaches into every corner and cranny of life; into sport as into employment; into literature as into social conventions: and with this change there can be expected some readjustment in politics, local government and administration.

Speaking broadly, what it is legitimate to expect women to contribute to public life is a shifting of emphasis from an exclusive concentration upon the things of primary interest to men, so as to admit of the inclusion also of the things of primary interest to women. In broad and general terms, men's concerns may be taken to be *things*—property, money, the development of trade and the exploitation of the resources of science and nature; and the women's concerns *people*—and the human personal adjustments which condition family and social life: and the needs of the young, the old, the sick and the sorry. The generalization which divides men's and women's special concerns in this way is a very rough one, but it is pretty generally accepted as being psychologically true, and—quite clearly—the course of the history of mankind during the centuries when

women had no authentic responsibility for the policy of the State bears it out.

If a shifting of emphasis of this sort is really a difference which the entry of women into Parliament may be expected to make, it is fair to ask whether the thirty-four M.P.s have in fact contributed to it: and the answer is obvious. However the individual performances of the thirty-four who are in the limelight may be assessed, however much or little they may have to their credit as politicians, the fact that they are there, and that behind them there are women voters, women members of party committees, women delegates to conferences, women County and Borough Councillors, women on Royal Commissions and among the delegates to Geneva, has transformed the stuff of politics. The programmes of all parties, the content of every Speech from the Throne, the purpose and the nature of legislation are all profoundly different in balance and emphasis from those of pre-War years. Health, housing, pensions, education, maternal mortality and workers' conditions have leapt into the forefront of national affairs, and the handling which they receive in the House of Commons is now that of major and not of trivial issues.

In the year 1890, before women were eligible to sit on local government bodies, there was a discussion on the borough council of one of the northern towns upon scholarships to technical schools. One of the Councillors happened, the next day, to tell Mrs. Henry Fawcett what had been under discussion, "And" said she, after hearing his good and progressive plans, "what are you doing for your girls?" The Councillor clapped his hand to his head—"Good heavens, Madam," he cried, "we forgot all about them." "Next time you go to a meeting," Mrs. Fawcett replied, "I advise you to take one of your wife's bonnets with you and hang it on the peg beside your own hat. Your Council may then find it easier to remember that there are women in the country." If the thirty-four women M.P.s had had no more brains than an empty bonnet, and had spoken no single word, but merely sat in their places and walked about the corridors of the Palace of Westminster, they would still have had that definite important use.

It is, no doubt, an invidious thing to attempt to weigh up

the value and the personal worth of contemporary figures. Lady Astor, with her talent for the vivid phrase and a flash of the insight which visits her with—at times—such startling effect, expressed the whole thing on the very first day she set foot in the place. With the two statesmen who were to introduce her (Mr. Balfour and Mr. Lloyd George) she was going up the stairs from the Terrace, and as they went up they passed one of the women cleaners on the House of Commons staff, who was at that moment mending a hole in the carpet, Lady Astor put her hand upon her shoulder as she passed—"They can't do without us," she said. And they can't.

DOCKLAND TAVERNS

BY THOMAS BURKE

THE closing of the *Turk's Head*, Wapping, a month or two ago has removed yet another of the few remaining characteristic taverns of the dock district. It seems always the characteristic that are picked upon for extinction, while the insipid gin-palaces of the middle nineteenth century are suffered to continue their irritation of eyes and mind. These places, however long they stand, never mature. They cannot, as eighteenth-century houses do, grow graciously into years and wear the patina of experience with the dignity and charm of old lace. Built by people careless of amenities, like the branches of multiple stores which offend the streets of our old towns, they can do nothing but get elderly and decrepit. And it seems that in a few years the London waterside will have nothing to show in the tavern way save these gimcrack, utilitarian structures.

Closing of the older places began long before our time. The charge against them was usually "redundancy," which surely could have been prevented by banning the intrusion of the ugly newcomers. Every now and then the charge has been repeated, and closing has gone on slowly but constantly, until the river and dock district, once so thick with picturesque and flavoured places, is beginning to look like Brixton or Camden Town: in Wapping High Street and Wapping Wall alone there were at one time thirty-six old taverns, most of them with signs of sea and river interest—the *Ship and Pilot*, the *Golden Anchor*, the *Queen's Landing*, the *Ship and Whale*, etc. Today it has but four or five. Thirty-six, of course, was far too many, and something had to be done, but it was not always done with nice discrimination. Other streets in the district had many a place of character (bad, perhaps, but richly bad), and one by one they have been obliterated or closed. One of the first to be closed was *Paddy's Goose*, in St. George Street (the old Ratcliff Highway);

it is now a Young People's Club. The *Prussian Flag*, in Ship Alley, was another Hogarthian house that earned, or received, condemnation. The famous, or notorious, *Old Mahogany Bar*, in Grace's Alley, Wellclose Square, still stands, but it stands on the stool of repentance as a mission hall and coffee palace.

Not all, however, are gone. Here and there the authorities grant us an old place or two where we may catch and make part of the long line of the gossip and geniality of the London waterman and seaman in his tavern hours. In these places time and history are ideas only; your evening is just a part of the long evening which began when watermen were rowing parties to Vauxhall or Cherry Gardens from Wapping Old Stairs or King Henry's Stairs; and captains from the Indies were sitting with their merchant-owners. One of the most pleasant waterside houses is not on the dock side of London Bridge; it is a little way up-stream, on Bankside. There you will find the *Anchor*, a neat, bright little house, looking much as it did at the end of the seventeenth century. It stands on the site of an even earlier house, which doubtless was there in the days of the Rose, the Swan, and the Globe Theatres. It was there when Queenhythe was still a little port, and when Bridewell and its female prisoners was one of the "sights" for the aimless well-to-do. It is there now, ten paces from the water, and you may sit and look through its windows upon tugs and lighters, as earlier customers looked upon royal and mayoral barges and the constant procession of citizens going upon their affairs by what was then the cheapest transport. Its opposite number, the *Old Swan*, of Lower Thames Street, which had as many centuries of life, is no more.

The *Tiger*, on Tower Hill, though not actually on the river, has had long associations with it and with the stained life of the Tower. It was rebuilt, many years ago, in ancient style, but its foundations date from the Tudors, and at one time its cellars communicated with the Tower by a private passage. The famous *Town of Ramsgate*, adjoining Wapping Old Stairs in the High Street (by going down the present stairs and twisting your neck to the right you may see the remains of the real Old Stairs), has also been rebuilt. The old place was a little dark and poky, but I liked it. It seemed right that it should be dark and

poky. The present place is much lighter and brighter, and no doubt when it has had long communion with men's hands and voices and doings and records, it will assume as rich a character as its parent. The rest of the High Street, on the river side, is mainly warehouses broken by stairs and piers, but if you continue to its end, and turn inward, and go along Wapping Wall, you come upon the *Prospect of Whitby*.

The origin of these signs is untraceable. Some say they are the names of ships which moored at the steps of these houses—Prospect (of Whitby), Town (of Ramsgate). Others, that they were named by landlords who were natives of these towns. Nobody really knows, nor does anybody really know much of the story of any of these river houses. Legends can be found of course ; such as the legend that Judge Jeffreys was caught by the mob at the *Town of Ramsgate*, when it was the *Red Cow*, where he was waiting for a boat to take him out of England ; and the many legends of the houcussing of poor seamen in the bad old days at all taverns along this reach. But authentic records are wanting, as they are with most old inns and taverns. Here and there those ubiquitous figure-heads of the English inn, Queen Elizabeth and Charles Dickens, turn up ; but landlords generally, past and present, have been too much in the stir of life to note and pass to their successors the significant event among a stream of events. Histories of our castles and mansions may be written, but nobody has yet been able to write the year-to-year history of any of our old town or country inns. Accounts and Visitors' Books are either destroyed as superfluous rubbish, or taken away by the retiring landlord, leaving the new landlord to begin on a virgin surface.

The *Prospect of Whitby* is agreeably old, with the attractive feature of a long verandah at the back, where you may sit and let your mind go with the ebb-tide out to sea and to the Indies or Bermudas of your dreams. This verandah is well known, not only locally, but in other districts, and in summer it is well filled. From it you can just see, diagonally opposite, the bay windows of another eighteenth-century house—the *Angel*, at Rotherhithe, which breaks over the water's edge. Both these houses suggest that they have stories, and in default of documented stories, you may sit in their windows, and from the inspiration of

their atmosphere and the moving waters, clothe them with your own. All inn legends have a beginning somewhere, and that somewhere is almost always the minds of the imaginative. Fixing the right story to the right inn or tavern is an exercise that goes amiably with a ruminative tankard. I have once or twice done it myself, and, having aired my creations, had the guilty gratification of hearing one of them repeated as history.

Within sight of the *Prospect of Whitby* is the *Mariner's Arms*. This is not notably old, but it has a fine situation. It stands in Shadwell High Street, and its windows look down to the public gardens (which were laid out on the site of the old Fish Market) and to Shadwell Basin and the river itself. The next ancient house actually on the water is the *Grapes*, at Limehouse; and here Dickens does legitimately turn up. This is the house which figures in the down-river scenes of *Our Mutual Friend*. That association brings to it every summer groups of American Dickensians, and from time to time some of the many writers on Dickensian topography, which gives the regular wharfmen and watermen customers something to look at besides the river. As with the other houses, the back windows are just above the water, with an up and down view; and when you have had enough of the water you may turn inward and watch a keen game of darts, and perhaps, if by a mis-spent youth you flick a pretty one, you may join in. At a spot quite near the *Grapes*, Ernest Dowson worked in the office of his father's dock, and it is rather more than likely that the bar of the *Grapes* knew him well.

The Isle of Dogs has no houses of marked character or structure, but you will find there—believe me or not—you will find there a house with the recondite sign of—the *Magnet & Dewdrop*. When I first saw it, years ago, I had to look three times; and next day, doubting my memory, I had to go back and convince myself that it was surely there. The *Ship*, at Greenwich, is still the old *Ship* that our grandfathers knew. It is much as it was when the Cabinets of Victorian days went down by boat to eat in its dining-room, or in that of the near-by *Trafalgar*, the widely-celebrated whitebait dinners. It has still its large and lofty dining-room looking across the river to Cubitt Town, its wide staircases, and its large and bright bars, also facing the river. The regular whitebait-dinner, according to Thackeray,

was a fish dinner of many courses to which whitebait was the peak. It began with flounder-soup, and went through salmon, sole, turtle, eels, and much else, each with its complementary wine. And you went hazily home in the moonlight by river or by road. The *Ship* and whitebait were as closely linked as Barclay and Perkins, or Spenlow and Jorkins, and a dinner at the *Ship* was one of the things to do. How many thousands of whitebait dinners it served in the nineteenth century, and how many notables of that age sat at its tables, are matters beyond conjecture. Of all river houses, it needs most urgently a historian, though the only valuable historian would be its walls. If they could do a little dictating, we should no doubt get piquant illumination on many a Question of the 'fifties and 'sixties. A Cabinet at the dinner-table, under the influence of the season's first whitebait and its accompanying champagne, would scarcely maintain Parliamentary reserve.

Near the Royal Albert Dock is a house of no great age or special note. Its chief interest is in its company, which is mainly men from the dock, and in the name of the district in which it stands. The district is really an assembly of a few short streets of houses, and it is named, for some undiscoverable reason, Cyprus. The house sticks in my own memory by another association. Within its bar I once overheard a remark which to this day I ponder and still cannot resolve. It returns to me in all the dim moments of life : when waiting on small railway stations—when listening to a Mahler symphony—when thinking about the career of Mr. X. It has all the glaring subtlety of a Buddhist *koan*, and all its simple sophistry. It was spoken by one lady to another : “ Mind you, ducky, I'm not saying that I'm always right. But I'm never wrong.”

At North Woolwich is a large nineteenth-century house, which is interesting by its garden alongside the river. And the river just here is made more interesting by the Woolwich Free Ferry boats—broad, squat steamers which cross every few minutes throughout the day and provide the children on both sides with a delightful Saturday pastime. They are named after prominent Londoners—Brunel, Will Crooks, etc. From North Woolwich they deliver you on the waterside of Woolwich proper, and in the street by the landing-stage you will find two or three char-

acteristic places. A notable and long-established tavern is *Plaisted's Wine House*, with wines from the wood ; and a little way along the road to Greenwich you will see the memorable sign of the *Old Sheer Hulk*. *Plaisted's* is still as I remember it in the far past, but the *Old Sheer Hulk* has been rebuilt in the ancient style. Its sign, however, helps to preserve its ancient flavour and to give a Tom Bowling zest to whatever one takes within its walls. Both places have that quality, indefinable and found only in waterside taverns ; something as open and easy and slow as the river itself, and expressed in the air and manners of the customers. And both have that aroma of continuous life and that hint of accumulated but unrecorded story.

To sit for an hour in any of the places I have named is to take a pleasant change from the smart lounges of central London, which have little power of retaining impressions, and seem always to have begun their career ten minutes before you arrived. Most of these river places are old, or old-established, and all of them have atmosphere, to say nothing of darts, dominoes, and the eternal pin-table. How long they will preserve that atmosphere I cannot guess. Already there are signs of its evaporation ; signs that they will soon become just anybody's places. Of late years they have been invaded by outsiders. On two or three occasions I have found their strong and quiet waterside atmosphere diluted by parties of young men with Montparnasse beards talking Chelsea and turning the bars into annexes of the *Fitzroy*, the *Plough*, or the *Cadogan*. So if you are of the right sort, take your enjoyment of them while they are still themselves.

A FLUKE

BY MICHAEL VORONETZ

TODAY, looking through the contents of an old chest, I found the revolver which Uncle George gave me almost exactly thirty-four years ago. It is the smallest revolver I have ever seen, and it is made of gold and ivory.

A marvellous fellow was Uncle George. He had travelled, explored, shot, fought, gambled, and loved in every known and unknown part of the globe. Unfortunately, his day was over when I appeared on the scene, and I remember him only as quite an old man. He had a scarlet face with a white imperial, a bluish nose, piercing eyes under bushy eyebrows and a lot of rebellious grey hair. He never spoke—he jeered, rasped and shouted. His conversation was mostly unprintable and his manners aggressive. People thought him an old brute and a bore, but I adored him and he was very fond of me.

He sent for me on the eve of my departure for Manchuria early in May, 1902. In those days I was deeply in love with ethnology, and was making such progress in my Chinese and Manchurian studies that my college sent me to Tsitsihar to try and disentangle the racial distinctions of the Manchu, Dawuhr, and Solon tribes that live pell-mell on the banks of the river Nonni. The funny part of it is that, youngster though I was, I did disentangle them to a certain extent. I even wrote a voluminous essay which my college printed in its monthly journal in a somewhat abridged form.

I came with alacrity. Uncle George sat in his favourite arm-chair, legs wide apart, displaying acres of bulging white piqué waistcoat. There was the usual proud tilt of his head, his piercing stare. He waved me on to a chair by his side.

“Ha!” he shouted. “Here we are, the hoary man of science. Going to Manchuria, eh? You lucky dog! That’s where all the men of sixteen should be.”

"I'm eighteen," I corrected.

He made a fearsome grimace, as if chewing a lemon, and yelled :

"You, eighteen ! Why, you're so timid, so careful, you might be eighty. You're late, as usual. The Boxer movement is done for ; fighting's over. But if, in spite of your white liver, you chance somehow upon a lively spot, here's something to defend yourself with."

And he tossed this revolver to me. I caught it and thanked him.

Still chewing, he continued : "Listen to me. This little thing will defend you, but only on certain conditions. One, always keep it handy in your pocket. Two, never pull it out unless you really mean to shoot, or you'll get it taken away from you. And three, if you shoot, shoot to kill. Got it ?"

"I've got it, uncle," I said, examining the revolver. Of its five chambers only two were loaded. "I say, d'you happen to have some more of this ammunition ?" I ventured brightly.

"Ammunition !" His face expressed boundless contempt. I held on to my chair, expecting a violent squall, but his eyes twinkled humorously, and his breath became short and quick, an unfailing symptom of a coming burst of laughter. And he did laugh, but before he exploded, he managed to stammer :

"More ammunition ! What for ? Two rounds is more than enough for a young man of your age."

From Uncle George's study to Tsitsihar station it now seems but a flash. An eastbound train dumped me at four o'clock in the morning on a long gravelly platform. It was still dark, though day was about to break. The sleepy man in shirt and trousers, who had despatched the train, had put out all the lamps before turning in again. A red light in the east and a green one in the west shone with a limpid, fascinating brightness. I saw some low buildings, some gleaming sidings, and beyond them a void of luminous darkness where brilliant stars were slowly setting. For some minutes I stood there taking in the beauty, and breathing the glorious air of the dawn. I was bound for the walled city of Tsitsihar hidden somewhere on the prairie fifteen miles to the north from the station, and was thinking of means to traverse that distance.

I heard the Chinaman's yawning before I saw him. He came on the platform, rubbing his eyes and stretching himself. In the growing light I saw that he was tall and gaunt and shabby. His clothes consisted of a short coat and trousers ; a length of twisted cloth served him as a belt in which were stuck a knife, a long pipe, and a pair of chopsticks. His chin and forehead were badly in need of a shave. He carried a long whip, a hint that a cart which might be the solution of my problem, was waiting in the yard of the station.

We eyed each other interestedly.

"Choh?" I inquired, which signifies cart.

He opened his mouth as wide as he could and shouted, "Tsitsihar?"

"Tsitsihar," I confirmed.

He raised three gnarled fingers to the level of my nose and said very distinctly, "Three dollars."

But I was forewarned. A Russian on the train had told me that the correct fare from the station to the city was one dollar. Raising one finger, I replied in my best Chinese, "One dollar."

He made a longish speech which, to my consternation, I failed to understand. To my ears, after two years of diligent study, it was but a flow of meaningless sounds, all except the last two words which were, "Three dollars."

"One dollar."

Seemingly in boredom, he looked at the fading stars, scratched his neck and yawned. "Two dollars."

I shrugged my shoulders and sat down on a suitcase. Again he made a speech, this time an emphatic one, with much waving of arms in a northerly direction. But I remained unmoved. He eyed me sideways for some moments, as if nonplussed, then grunted and picked up my other suitcase.

"One dollar?" I asked, meaningly.

Without another word he led the way to the yard behind the buildings.

Riding in a Chinese cart is never a pleasure, and if the road is bumpy it can be a torture. But the trail we took was perfectly level, and the contraption—a wooden platform with two shafts and two massive wheels of prehistoric design—rolled along without the slightest vibration. There was a sturdy Mongol

pony in the shafts and, fanwise in front, two mules and a donkey. I sat cross-legged on some battered straw, breathing that glorious air and shivering with the wonderful feeling of being alone beneath the paling sky in the perfumed wilderness of the prairie. As far as eye could see it was all dewy grass and flowers. Here and there the flowers grew in large patches, but it was the single ones, vivid dots of red, yellow, mauve, and blue on fresh green, that I thought the more effective. In the first hour of the journey I counted four lakes flecked with gold by the rising sun and set in winding borders of dark-green rushes. They harboured large flocks of ducks and geese, some of which took off at our approach, churning the blue water into foam. The smaller denizens of the grass—larks, mice, and grasshoppers—were waking up with chirping, whistling, and twittering. In the north some dark shadows were gradually taking the form of trees and houses. It was a small village, perhaps an outpost of my Manchu, Dawuhr, and Solon tribes, but at the time I felt no urgent desire to come to grips with their distinctions.

I wanted my breakfast, and my legs had gone to sleep, which made me realize that our pace was that of a snail. My driver sat huddled up in the front of the cart, embracing his whip, his head swaying from side to side.

"Hey!" I called as gruffly as I could.

He did not seem to hear.

I touched him on the shoulder. "Hey there, kuai!"

Kuai is the Chinese for quick, but he paid no attention.

"Kuai-kuai-de," I insisted in commanding tones.

He turned, slowly, and gave me a long look which compared, as I have learned since, with that of a disgusted camel. A sinister face with sullen, ominous eyes.

"One dollar, eh?" he muttered through his teeth, and spat far out on the grass. Apparently he thought that arguing with me was sheer waste of time, for he deliberately curled up on the straw and closed his eyes.

So that was it! He was trying to bully me into raising his fare. My first impulse was to throw him off the cart and beat him into submission, as Uncle George would have done. But I thought better of it. With that village only a few hundred yards away, it seemed safer to defer reprisals till after my arrival

in the city. But I would certainly not increase his fare, nor would he cart me along like a sack of potatoes.

"Kuai-kuai-de!" I roared at the top of my voice.

And that did it. He uncoiled like a spring; his whip cracked; his startled beasts changed abruptly from sleepy walk to frenzied gallop. We bounded forward in a cloud of dust through which I could just see him squatting in the cart and whirling his whip. It was exciting, and rather disturbing, as that spurt of speed could not be due to any desire of his to please me.

After some minutes of wild galloping, we came to a sudden stop in the middle of the village, a hamlet of a dozen houses facing each other across the road. On the right, standing in the shade of some fine old trees, were two cattle-sheds and a larger building comprising an eating-place and a smithy. In the frontless depths of the one I saw a few rough tables and benches; from the other came sounds of heavy hammering. On a patch of cultivated land to the left of the village, two blue figures were bending over their work. Several hens, surrounded with half-grown chickens, were scratching busily in the middle of the road.

Our arrival attracted the attention of some lazy dogs and a stout middle-aged woman with bound feet, who appeared in a doorway, wiping a rice-bowl with a piece of blue cotton. The driver, having slipped off the cart, began to unhitch his team. Thinking that fresh animals would be put in their place, I jumped out to stretch my legs.

The stout woman flung a sharp question at the driver who was working silently at a multitude of intricate knots. He answered readily, and went on talking and talking. Again I failed to grasp the exact meaning of his words, but there was no mistaking his intonations, a quick succession of whining and yelping, shades of disgust, annoyance, resentment, and disappointment. When he stopped, the woman took up the talking in a high, metallic voice and in a tone of angry scolding. I wondered at her staying power and the harshness of her voice, which penetrated every nook and cranny in the village. Already windows were sliding open; women were peeping out; a pack of nut-brown, almost naked urchins had galloped up to gape at me. Half-clad, muscular men began to appear in doorways. One by

ne they came over and stood there, silent, gazing at me with infocussed eyes. Soon the blue figures from the fields were here, leaning on their tools, thick sticks shod with iron; and the blacksmith, a heavy man with a flat, pockmarked face, strolled over with his hammer. And still the driver worked at his knots, the woman talking. I felt instinctively that when she stopped something untoward would happen.

She stopped when the last knot was undone. With vicious kicks the driver sent his team trotting into a shed, then gave a sudden, truly bestial squeal which sent cold shivers down my back. He had been working himself up, building up his anger. Never had I seen such fury. His lips had vanished completely, exposing two rows of yellow fangs dripping with foam. Choking and spluttering, he poured on me a torrent of what I guessed was horrible abuse. He raged alternately at both sides of the human being by which I was now surrounded. His horny finger stabbing at me, he kept shrieking, "He pays one dollar, one dollar!"

At last I knew the cause of the trouble. As it was obviously not the time to haggle over fares, I decided to meet him half-way and even to pay him in advance. "Two dollars," I said, offering him two silver coins on an open palm.

But he was past financial adjustments. He sprang at me like a tiger; he struck my hand and spilt the coins in the dust. He kicked them, trampled them; he leapt back and spat on them. Pushing his way to the cart, he threw my bags on the road. The squeal he then emitted was utterly inhuman and was addressed to the blacksmith who replied with a piercing yell. His placid face had suddenly become a mask of hatred. I saw them moving uneasily on all sides with breathless yelps ringing like Kick him! Hit him! Kill him! A stalwart labourer shortened his hold on his stick . . .

But here came unexpected intervention. The stout woman gave an unearthly shriek through which I heard the frantic cackling of the hens. Startled, we all looked in that direction and saw a bird of prey swoop down on the road and rise again with a chicken in its talons.

What I did then was not the product of thought, for there had been no time for thinking. I simply jerked Uncle George's revolver from my pocket and fired at the bird as it flew by,

heading for the open. There was a dry report and some blue smoke. The bird dropped the chicken, shot straight up, and fell like a stone.

I have never ceased marvelling at the audacity of my subsequent behaviour. The Chinese, of course, were petrified with surprise. Ignoring them completely, I calmly pocketed my revolver. Languidly I got my cigarette-case, chose a cigarette and lit it. The ring of my aggressors being close, I tapped the nearest man on the shoulder. He shrank away and I walked out in the open. Slowly, one by one, I put my bags back into the cart; and then I turned and faced them, hands in pockets, legs somewhat apart, the cigarette dangling in my lips.

The paralysing panic I had experienced was gone. Something within me—perhaps my soul—was singing, dancing, rejoicing. But I did all I could to put on my face an expression of mingled cruelty and boredom. I even remember thinking of myself in the terms of the heroic literature which I had just outgrown: "He was alone and unarmed, but the steely pin-points of his eyes held them in subjection." Steely pin-points! I was a youngster of eighteen; my face was pink and unlined. That pose must have been supremely ridiculous, but it worked. They had no reason, or right, to suspect a fluke, and crack revolver shooting is crack revolver shooting.

It broke their spirit. They stood there, not knowing what to do and gazing at me with respect akin to fear. My driver was the first to break down. He suddenly trotted off and returned dragging his animals. Willing hands came forward to help him tie them to the cart. Meanwhile, the urchins had retrieved the bird, a biggish hawk; and one of them, a pleasant boy of some twelve summers, brought it for my inspection. He spoke in awed tones as he ruffled the crimsoned feathers under its right wing. His eyes were full of abject submission; I was his master and he would love to serve me if he could.

But I barely glanced at the hawk. My *attelage* was ready, my driver waiting, and there remained only the matter of the dollars they had knocked out of my hand.

"Hey, two dollars," I said crisply to the blacksmith who was coming over to examine the bird.

He stopped short. "Two dollars?"

"Yes, two dollars." I pointed at the dusty road.

"O, o, o!" he stuttered, and laughed. "Two dollars!" Why, of course! Now he knew what I meant. He turned to the others and said quite comprehensibly:

"He wants his two dollars."

And that finally put an end to tension. They all laughed, shyly at first, then uproariously. Fancy forgetting all about that money! How stupid of them! But they would soon get it for me. And they tried, some of them combing the dust with their fingers, but search as they might, they could not find the coins.

After a breezy argument with them, the blacksmith came to me with a distressed look on his face; and here the stout woman broke in again with a broadside of stinging admonitions. It sounded as though she were saying, "What, can't find the money? Somebody's pinched it, of course. You thieves! Well, you'd better give it back to him, or he'll shoot you up on the spot."

Apparently the idea that the missing money should be made good by them was not to their liking, for they instantly dispersed. They simply faded out of the picture, and even my driver trotted away, ostensibly to get some fresh straw for the cart. There remained only the blacksmith, perhaps the richest man in the village; and he tried to tell the stout woman that he had done nothing wrong, but was completely outshouted. With a protesting grumble, he produced a leather pouch and explained slowly and distinctly that he had no dollars. All he had was a small coin of inferior silver, but he would pay me at yesterday's rate of exchange, and it would come to the same. He counted into my hand ten twenty-cent pieces, two of ten cents each, six copper cents and a number of perforated cash. And then we rolled out of the village at a brisk trot, escorted by cheering boys and barking dogs. But the last I heard of it was the loud, metallic laughter of the stout woman.

During the rest of the journey my driver sat in the front of the cart, embracing his knees and whip, and spoke vehemently, as if considering an obtuse problem. I was no longer interested in the prairie. All sorts of engrossing hints were crowding into my head, but his talking made orderly thinking impossible.

Safely delivered at my destination, I gave him one dollar, which he accepted with thanks and again started talking. I would have paid no heed to him, but the houseboy who had come out to fetch my bags was listening with round-eyed attention.

"What does he say?" I asked.

He heard the driver out to the end, then turned to me. "He says master very clever, very strong. He says suppose somebody must die, better somebody else die, much better. Who die?"

My engrossing hints, he had them in a nutshell! Of course that bird had died that I might live! And that reminded me of Uncle George's jeering: "Two rounds is more than enough for a young man of your age."

If it were not for one little bullet and a preposterous fluke——

I felt rising in me a warm, joyous feeling; I felt an urge to do something large and selfless, and, on the impulse of the moment, I gave the driver two more dollars.

EBB AND FLOW

A Monthly Commentary

BY STEPHEN GWYNN

DURING all these complicated years that have seen so many strange developments in Europe, Spain seemed to lie outside of the main whirlpool. It had its own violent upheavals, its clash of currents ; but no drag from them was felt beyond the Pyrenees. Then, on a sudden, **Spanish Strife** a death-grapple begins, and within a week throughout all Europe each contending party has sympathisers who might easily become backers. What set a match to the tinder was the assassination by shock police (i.e., members of a Government force) of the leader of one of the opposition groups. Such things have happened in Japan, and are not there regarded, it would seem, as they must be in any European community : but for Europeans and above all for Spaniards, it was natural enough to think that recourse to arms offered the only chance of safety. The army leaders headed rebellion, wherever they had the power ; and in Morocco they controlled the situation. Naturally they declared that the Government was not really a Spanish Government, but the tool of Moscow.

No doubt this was only true to a very limited extent : many of us can remember when the Tory Party was urging the British army to regard the Liberal Government as tools of the disloyal Irish ; but, in fact, the Liberal Government's action in 1911-14 represented a strong current of British opinion, and so, I have no doubt, did that of the Spanish in 1935-6. It is not denied that Moscow, through one of its agencies, interferes constantly in the politics of other States, and even backs its interference

with gold. But the essence of the fact is that Moscow has become the centre of a faith which makes votaries all over Europe, and far beyond Europe. It is a political religion, but none the less a religion because it is political : like every religion it takes on the imprint of national character. Spanish Bolshevism is ardent and austere to the point of ferocity just as is Spanish Catholicism ; and men throughout Europe draw conclusions from what is happening in Spain according to their individual predilections. Many Englishmen, many Frenchmen hold that the general cause of liberty is at stake, and that the " loyalists " represent the hopes of democratic government. At least as many more in both countries see no chance for individual freedom unless the " rebels " win.

The two Great Powers, where opinion has licence to be divided, desire to maintain strict neutrality between the parties in this civil war. Any other course would create grave internal difficulties for them—more especially for the French, where a Socialist Government is in power. The same is probably true of Belgium, and in general the smaller countries are disposed to fall in with the policy of England and France. But there remains the question of the three Powers which by the very nature of their institutions are committed to partisanship. In reply to the proposal initiated by France and supported by England, all three profess a desire to stand aloof, but all three stipulate that everyone else does the same. Now it is not easy to see how either Russia, Italy or Germany could in reality be neutral even if Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler all desired it. The issue at stake comes home to these nations far more closely than did the cause of Abyssinia to the English people : and yet at one grim moment public opinion in England would have justified the risk of war for the sake of the Covenant. Ambitious rulers, even when they possessed despotic power, will not take a grave risk without assurance of public enthusiasm behind them, but when that enthusiasm exists, and prompts to action, there is real ground to fear lest the risk be taken.

Undoubtedly, if these potentates were good Europeans, their first thought would be for the peace of Europe. But it requires

some stretch of fancy to attribute that virtue to the *Führer*. About the *Duce*, one is less sure ; the French at least feel some European solidarity with him as a Latin ; and already it is said in France that, though England is a sure ally, England has no army and is slow to move ; therefore, to revive cordial relations with Italy should be the chief object of French policy. This, however, is not likely to please the supporters of M. Blum, who are already somewhat out of hand. Any marked advance towards Italy would be taken as a compromise with Fascism and as taking sides against the legitimate Government of Spain.

In short, all the cards are in the hands of the Fascist powers, since Russia is out of reach. To take a single instance : Hitler can without difficulty give free passage for all General Franco's troops across the Strait under the escort of German ships. The Spanish Government obliged him with a pretext, because one of its gunboats shelled a German merchantman at Laraiche and because four Germans were shot in cold blood by the revolutionary party in Barcelona. If Germany took this step, would the British fleet or the French fleet have any ground to intervene ? And if this intervention were undertaken, would it be supported by united public opinion in either country. A general move to stamp out Bolshevism in that part of Western Europe where it has taken strongest hold would have possibly more support—even in England—than action against a Fascist power which almost certainly would mean European war.

There is perhaps no need to conjure up these formidable possibilities ; and one reassuring circumstance is that Herr Hitler evidently desires to make the most of the goodwill acquired by Berlin's welcome to athletes of all nations at the Olympic games. That manifestation of the German genius for organization has filled foreign observers with admiration. Yet it is only another expression of what was shown in the swift move into the Rhineland. It is true, however, that the very exclusiveness of German ideals has something reassuring for Europe. "National Socialism," Hitler is reported to have told a French interviewer, "is not an article of export." This has to be understood, of course, as meaning that it is designed for the culture of all such territory as Germany may decide to be racially or spiritually German : but at least there are limitations, and probably nothing

could be less in accord with the *Führer's* wishes than to see France or England or both go Fascist. Bolshevism, on the other hand, being avowedly international, is avowedly designed to spread, and the methods for spreading it have been worked out in consultation with headquarters at Moscow.

One reaction to the Spanish incident has been notable in Greece. A general strike threatened, and the new King, who has to all appearance done his utmost to establish constitutional government, felt obliged to place dictatorial powers in the hands of General Metaxas. Liberals in Greece (the largest single party) and Liberals outside Greece think this measure mistaken and sinister. But the general strike, even if it is only partially accomplished, brings about a state of things far nearer to anarchy than can be faced in a country where order is not perfectly established.

In more settled lands, the danger is less. Here in France, where I write, the advent of a Socialist Government was accompanied, not by the general strike, but by an epidemic of local ones. It is curious to learn how many of the well-to-do in Paris thought it desirable to leave the country ; and how many garrisoned their houses and laid in provision of cartridges for revolvers and shot-guns. That phase passed : the whole period went by without a single act of bloodshed, and it left some very odd impressions. One of them was the perfect discipline, good humour and gaiety of the employees who took possession of huge establishments, for instance the great shops in Paris. Everything was kept in such a state that the doors could be opened to the public as usual at any moment and that all would go forward without the least difference. One director of such a place came daily to his office, went without let or hindrance to his accustomed table, and found the correspondence on it in perfect order—incoming mails opened and laid out. But nobody spoke to him or recognized his presence. His reaction was a feeling that some day he would arrive there and be told, " You may go home, sir, and need not return : we have no further occasion for you ;" and that, in fact, there would be no occasion for him.

On the whole, the Government can make a good case for its

refusal to take drastic action against manifestations which were admittedly illegal, but which have been peaceably brought to an end. Legislation, hurriedly carried, to bring about general social improvement is accepted with more or less good grace by M. Blum's opponents. Everyone knew that wages in France were too low, and working hours too long, and that trade unions should have recognition. The question now is whether these changes can operate without raising the cost of living to a disastrous degree ; and the answer is not yet in sight. But one thing is clear. France is never again going to be a country which will attract foreigners by its cheapness : though they will continue to get surprising value for their money owing to the concentration of French intelligence on the provision of amenities. I wish I knew an hotel anywhere in England, Scotland or Ireland where one could be fed and lodged at any time for eight shillings a day as I am at the most crowded moment of the season, at a rather expensive health resort in Auvergne. And, to judge by the number of motor-cars, the *crise* must be considerably abating, for those whom I see about me are not rich people—most of them *petite bourgeoisie*. Whoever they are, the men dress as only the richest Frenchmen used to dress before the war, in a fashion not distinguishable from the English. All the stiffness of clothes, which was the stiffer, according as one dropped in the social scale, has gone ; one would look far to find a black coat or a starched collar. And for the most part, all that one sees are hardy well-nourished people. Military service is certainly no bad thing for the health of a race.

Still, nothing will ever make the French soldierly-looking, in the German or the English sense. It is hard to believe that every man one sees over three and twenty has learnt to use a rifle and to march with a heavy pack. I suppose no people in the world were ever less militarist by disposition ; and one remarkable episode of this month has let us all know how little of the martial spirit goes into their public education. The national union of school-teachers held a conference at Lille and gave itself over to a series of discussions on war when many speakers were applauded for

—And Old
Eddies

discourses that went far beyond the not yet forgotten resolution of the Oxford Union Society. One gentleman demanded that if war were declared, the action of France should at once be paralysed by a general strike of workmen. Another explained that even if conquest by another power meant servitude, that was better than death, because you might escape from servitude but death was definitive. These sentiments were indeed not embodied in resolutions ; the meeting declared its confidence in the Socialist Government ; but they were applauded, and no such applause was given to the speakers from Alsace Lorraine who said that they would much sooner die than be put back to the goose-step, and that they did not expect France to desert them.

These manifestations were, of course, discussed both in the Upper and Lower House, and deputies asked whether it was reasonable to permit public servants to preach these doctrines. The Minister for Education, having expressed his disapproval of such views, argued that these servants of the State loyally carried out their duty in the teaching rooms, but that outside the class, teachers should have freedom to speak the thing they would ! He added, which was nearer to the purpose, that in 1913 very similar discourses had been addressed to the same body, but that when war came, some two thousand school teachers had fallen on the field of honour and nearly eight thousand had earned mention in despatches. In point of fact, anyone who knows even a little of France will be certain that conscientious objectors would get even shorter shift than in 1914, if the territory of France were in peril ; but it is true that such freedom of speech as is now permitted and used hampers preparations which unhappily cannot be regarded as unnecessary. French logic also is not slow to point ironically at the zeal with which French pacifists urge the Government to furnish arms to Spaniards to use against what they call a Fascist enemy.

As to the Government itself, one cannot but think that M. Blum would welcome a decisive event in Spain—even if it decided the issue against his personal preference. Any kind of a house next door is better than a house on fire. But, owing to the geography of Spain and to its deep-seated provincialism, it is beyond reasonable hope to expect any swift settlement.

Some French commentators hold that Hitler has decided to limit his intervention to such supply of munitions as has been already accomplished, because he is confident that the side which he favours needs no more help. And indeed it is remarkable that a rebellion which met severe checks at its outset should have persisted till after three weeks it holds twenty-seven provinces out of forty-nine. There is no want of determination in the Government levies—many of whom had some training in “para-military formations,” but disciplined troops have an advantage which always tends to increase. It is odd to think how many of these disciplined soldiers are Moors, led back by Spaniards to the conquest of Spain : odd also that the final conquest of this long-disputed Riff territory should furnish the means for attack on the Spanish Government. If the “whites” win, the Riff will be guarded as a precious possession ; if the “reds,” there may be a disposition among them to wash their hands of Africa. And if Spain were disposed to get rid of its African possessions, then indeed there would be perturbation in the Chancellories : Germany and Italy would both have a word to say.

African Prospect

It is worth noting that the one place in French territory where strikes have led to bloodshed was Mostaganem in Algeria : and there is certainly unrest in North Africa. At the school teachers' congress, Moorish teachers came forward to complain fiercely that they had not equality of privilege with the Europeans. This is only one part of a widespread discontent ; and, since the last independent African kingdom has now ceased to be under African rule, and Germany raises a claim to her part in the spreading of European culture over Africa, we may be thankful to two able women for books which give some insight into the general situation. Miss L. P. Mair, lecturer in Colonial Administration at the London School of Economics, reviews with copious detail *Native Policies in Africa* ; Miss Marjory Perham, bringing together in *Ten Africans* a group of typical life stories, each related by its subject, illustrates by individual instances a great deal that Miss Mair discusses in the abstract. The result, unhappily, is not comfortable reading, whether it concerns those regions where the white man has taken the black man's country to live and work in, or those where Europe has come in reality for

purposes of trade. Mary Kingsley—whose approach to African problems was more intimate than that of these later students—never tackled the former group of problems ; but she justified, for Africa as for America, occupation of land by the stronger race, knowing well that throughout Africa more energetic peoples in successive waves have dispossessed the weaker breeds, and shown no mercy. It does not seem that any of Miss Perham's ten Africans disputes the right of conquest. The resentment expressed is that in those parts of Africa where the white can live Africans should be barred from competing in all but the lowest paid employments. This offends against that primitive and universal sense of justice which Mary Kingsley held ought to be sacred ; and a society which maintains the colour bar in this fashion must always be sitting on the safety-valve. Under French rule, at least a safety-valve can work : the African who attains to European education is not limited by arbitrary restrictions. It is true that, although the educated native of Algeria is received as an equal in France, he is regarded with suspicion and dislike by French Algerians ; but this is less a question of colour than of ascendancy : the native is presumed to have disloyal feelings and designs on the colonists' land—just as in Ulster. Presumably the Italian attitude to Abyssinians will be the same as that of the French to Arabs or Moors. Yet one of Miss Perham's ten, a missionary-taught teacher from Kenya, says that journeying from Mombasa (as part of a delegation) on an Italian ship he found that the barber would not cut his hair, because European customers would boycott his shop. Possibly, however, these were not Italian customers.

There is, of course, no real parallel between the conquest of South Africa and that of Abyssinia. Morocco is an analogy : and every Moor is taught that he may become a French citizen. Italy may make Abyssinians into Roman citizens in the old sense. But neither in West, East or South Africa can Africans under British rule possibly feel that they are fully privileged British subjects. Under German government they would be even less likely to attain equality with the white. As things are now, the African who has been educated on European lines everywhere desires to

Europe
in Africa

attain that equality. Those who think with Miss Mair hold that even selected individuals can only attain a semblance of satisfaction for this desire, while for the mass of the people development on European lines destroys what is best in traditional negro culture. She is for "indirect rule," though she makes us realize how difficult the experiment is and how uncertain its goal. Miss Perham's witnesses illustrate the problem. The simplest among them sums up: "The young people of today have no respect. They don't listen to the words of their chiefs. I tell you it was better before the white man came. But then sometimes I think in my heart, 'But where could we find the clothes and the salt and the matches that we buy at the stores?' " Another says that taxation which the chiefs have to carry out breeds thieves. Another, who knew the old order, says, "You may be inconvenienced by your tax every year, but it is better than finding yourself on the end of a spear or sold as a slave"—still, that man had been a policeman and had acquired a feeling for law and order. Another, born and bred a workman for Europeans, has contempt for the old people who had neither learned nor worked. But then his experience of work was in East Africa, where a black workman may hold any job he can get. This is not so in South Africa, and from South Africa the angriest voices come. And what can the Imperial Government do about that?

It is a grave problem. In those parts of Asia which the English-speaking people rule, the English-speaking stock dies out; there is no competition of survival. But in North America a high type of primitive hunters has virtually been killed by the white man's guns and his whiskey. In Australia, even when the European Governments tried to preserve the most primitive human type existing, contact with civilization was fatal to the stone-age men. But in Africa the negro multiplies faster than ever beside white men, because there are fewer big killings; and the more powerful culture exercises an irresistible fascination for him. It drew the Australian native as moths are drawn to a lamp, and that was the end of them. When the African approaches it, something is singed and some fineness is lost; but the springs of his life are not destroyed. The French method which aims at turning a select few Africans into fully quali-

fied Europeans certainly makes a more powerful appeal to Africans than the English, which tells the race to develop gradually on purely African lines. But then the French advocates of their policy are not hampered by a feeling that the fully educated African will find himself confronted by the colour bar when he seeks for a career.

THE FORTNIGHTLY LIBRARY

INQUEST ON A SAD DEATH

BY ROBERT BERNAYS, M.P.

THE STRANGE DEATH OF THE LIBERAL PARTY, by George Dangerfield. Constable. 12s. 6d.

A MOST interesting book is waiting to be written on the decline and fall of the Liberal Party in England. It should begin with the Home Rule split of the 'eighties when the Liberal Party lost the support for ever of the Great Whig land-owners who had given it the essential characteristic for a Left political party of respectability. It would deal with the causes of the tidal wave of the Liberal triumph of 1906 and would analyse the reasons why it so soon spent itself. The sudden bid of the Trades Unions for political power would, of course, come under review; and also the crushing effect of the War on Liberal fortunes; and the influence of the khaki election; and the coalition with the Conservatives that followed. Fascinating chapters could be written on the inner history of the gallant and self-sacrificing efforts of a group of men with Asquith at their head to revive the Liberal Party in the post-War years and how at one time they appeared likely to be successful, only to be thwarted by the intransigence of Labour and the obstinate determination of a powerful section of Liberalism never to trust Mr. Lloyd George again.

I had hoped that something of the sort would be attempted in a book that had the attractive title of *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, but I was dis-

appointed. The author confines himself to the four stormy years between 1910-1914 and seeks to prove that it was in that period that the Liberal leaders signed the death-warrant of their party.

Admittedly, that administration was faced with domestic problems of a gravity that make our own domestic issues today, which are largely confined to a battle over the Means Test, appear very trivial in comparison. Mr. Dangerfield divides them under four headings: The Tory rebellion over, first the Parliament Act and then the exclusion of Ulster from the Home Rule Bill; the Women's rebellion against the exclusive political domination of men; and finally the Workers' rebellion against low wages and the reactionary attitude of their employers. But there is really no basis for Mr. Dangerfield's contention that Liberal England perished in its attempt to deal with them, even judged by the rather unreal test of the position of the Liberal Party in 1914.

In actual fact that Liberal Government survived in a remarkable manner these recurrent crises which would have shattered weaker administrations. In the last few months of the long peace the Liberal Party was passing through rough by-election water, but it was no worse than that encountered by other governments who have enjoyed a long lease of power. The Labour Party that he appears to think had already superseded

Liberalism as the embodiment of working class aspirations was, in spite of the long series of strikes and lock-outs, making astonishingly little progress. Its poll at by-elections was frequently derisive. The Liberals might have been defeated in the General Election that would have come in 1915, but there is no reason to suppose that they would not have been able to present themselves as the Radical alternative in 1920.

Liberal thought was not by any means exhausted in 1914. Mr. Dangerfield ignores altogether that extraordinary output of social legislation from 1906 to 1914, which laid the foundations of the modern structure of social legislation and induced as keen a Labour Party man as Mr. Arthur Henderson, to observe that "no party had done more for the workers in that period than the Liberals."

Mr. Dangerfield's main contention appears to be that Liberalism in those years surrendered to force what it denied to reason. If that was true, it would be the most damaging criticism that he could make. For undoubtedly in Europe, the collapse of Liberalism in the post-War years has been due to its inherent weakness in dealing with the forces opposed to democracy. It still continued to play the rules of the game, when it was clear that a powerful section of the crowd were determined that no game should be played, and that they would not shrink from force in its most ruthless and savage form to prevent it being played.

But can that charge be sustained against the English Liberals? It may be that in Ireland they delayed too long in striking at the Ulster gun-runners, and that a prosecution of Sir Edward Carson and "Galloper" Smith was long overdue. But, had the civil war come, there is no reason to suppose that they would have hesitated to employ every weapon at their disposal in order to crush it. In other directions they dealt

with disorder promptly and even harshly. Mr. Dangerfield gives a description, which makes most unpleasant reading, of the methods of forcible feeding against the hunger-striking suffragettes. Mr. Churchill, who was Home Secretary during the greater part of the grave industrial strife, was certainly not a man who would tamely submit to civil disorder. He struck at it and struck hard. At the time of the Railway Strike of 1911, "Mr. Churchill," writes Mr. Dangerfield, "casting aside administrative forbearance began to send soldiers hither and yon, with a scarcely concealed alacrity. At twenty-seven different centres the troops appeared, sometimes because there was serious rioting, sometimes because there might be serious rioting." Whatever else may be said on that course of action it is hardly evidence of administrative weakness.

It was not domestic difficulties, but the War that shattered the Liberal Party. From the split of December, 1916, it never recovered. The Labour Party was given its chance in the election of 1918 to capture the Radical vote, and once the working men had acquired the habit of voting Labour they could not be weaned back from it.

But, though the Liberal Party of the pre-War brand may be dead, Liberal England is very much alive. Indeed, not the least important reasons for the progressive decline of the Liberal Party fortunes in the last few years is that all parties are now preaching Liberalism. The Conservative Party can govern the country only because it has shed its Conservatism, and the Labour Party would not enjoy even its measure of strength today if it, too, did not strive to pose as the residuary legatee of the old Liberal Party. No man ought to set out to write a book on English politics without being aware of these elementary facts.

UP AND DOWN THE COUNTRY

BY H. E. BATES

POT LUCK IN ENGLAND, by Douglas Goldring. *Chapman & Hall.* 7s. 6d.

ENGLISH DOWNLAND, by H. J. Massingham. *Batsford.* 7s. 6d.

TANKARD TRAVELS, by Gordon Beccles. *Chapman & Hall.* 7s. 6d.

HISTORY IN THE OPEN AIR, by Henry John Randall. *Allen & Unwin.* 4s. 6d.

JUST over a year ago, in these pages, I made a plea for a book dealing not with the beauty of England, since such books were even then two for three ha'pence, but with its ugliness. Mr. Goldring's *Pot Luck in England* is as near being such a book as anything I have met since. In 1935, after some years in Sweden "and a too prolonged sojourn in the South of France," Mr. Goldring returned to England with a determination to settle down. Instead, he got bored—not with London, or his work, or his home, but with his suburb, with the Fulham Road. The result was that one day he jumped on a bus. It took him to Chelmsford. There he jumped on another. After that he jumped on another. Subsequently, without any pre-arrangement, he jumped on and off buses for several weeks, until finally he had covered a wide circle of Midland and Southern England, from London to East Anglia and the Derbyshire peaks down to Shrewsbury and Bath and the Quantocks and back to London. The result of it all is this book, a sort of contemporary *Rural Rides*, the record of a series of bus rides in modern England.

Like Cobbett, Mr. Goldring is a writer of candour and fearlessness. He is a

very hard hitter. He holds a theory, as I do, that love of one's country ought to be perfectly compatible with criticism of it. Thus, though he loves England—even *because* he loves England—he sees much in it to detest. As a traveller he is naturally much concerned with food and accommodation. When he began the journeys described in this book he had just returned from countries where such things were of paramount and vital importance. His disgust at finding an England full of ill-kept, unimaginative hotels, puritanically restricted public houses and the "alleged refreshment rooms of our railway companies" is therefore enormous. A country that can tolerate these things deserves, as he points out, to lose the bulk of its sensible travelling public to other and more sensible countries. In the course of his tour he stayed in over twenty inns and hotels, in various counties. All but one were bad. All were more or less expensive. He never overcame a feeling of trepidation when entering them, a "feeling that I had to explain myself and humbly by that he vouchsafed." Not once does he enthuse over an excellent meal or a regional dish or an inspired bottle. He records, as illustrating the cheerless and puritanical bondage under which the English traveller still exists, a story which deserves to be immortal: "I was in a pub the other day which displayed a notice: 'No music. No singing. No Loud Laughing.' Can you beat that?" He couldn't. He could confirm, in fact, the substance of its truth for himself.

So with towns. If a town is ugly he records it; he castigates it. He is no worshipper of accepted beauty spots. Nor, between praising and damning one thing and another, does he lose any opportunities for a little deviation into propaganda: war, peace, sanctions, the League of Nations, arms and the manufacturers of them, the craziness of mankind in general. He has some comments, not very illuminating and incidentally wrong in fact, on contemporary literature, and he introduces, now and then, a page or two of potted history. The book would, to my mind, have been better without all of these things. It is, even so, a highly entertaining and salutary chronicle.

Mr. Massingham belongs neither to that category nor to Mr. Goldring's. He is too constantly concerned with hard fact to be gushing; he is too tolerant and too Catholic to be whipped into anger. Also, in *English Downland*, in which he covers the whole of the English chalk from Dunstable to Dorchester and from Salisbury to Dover, he clearly has every inch of his work cut out, without deviations either into treacle-dipping or propaganda. His book is only 30,000 words in length, a fact of which he complains sadly, though to my mind this brevity makes the book doubly admirable. I am all for many photographs and much compactness. *English Downland* fulfils both conditions perfectly.

Such books as this are not meant to be exhaustive; they should be stimulants, verbal aphrodisiacs, kindling a warmer and fuller desire for scenes and places. Mr. Massingham is exactly at ease here. Never a lyrical writer, he hovers between fact and enthusiasm in such a way as to create at once an effect of solidity and allurements. He satisfies and stimulates. One longs to go in actuality almost everywhere he takes one in print; all up and down the Chilterns and over the Berkshire Downs and into Wiltshire and Dorset and back through Sussex and Kent; which is the only true test of any book of travelling whatsoever.

In contrast, I have no desire to accompany Mr. Gordon Beccles. His book purports to be a collection of short stories—which it is not—inspired by a journey up and down England and “a chance meeting with an elderly English gentleman in a Devonshire inn.” Actually it is nothing more than a series of newspaper articles sewn together to make a book. In Fleet Street Mr. Beccles has the reputation of being brilliant. This book makes him appear tenth-rate. It is all very slick, dishonest and even sloppy. These stories, the records of eavesdroppings in odd places in Yorkshire, Cardiff, Cumberland, in pubs, harbours, railway stations and so on, are not stories at all. They are not even anecdotes. They are simply samples of Daily Expressionism.

If Mr. Beccles, or indeed anyone else, should doubt that *Tankard Travels* is imitation stuff, let him get *History in the Open Air*. This is a genuine, concise, first-rate reconstruction of that history of England which is written on the map of England “in letters of earth and stone, of bank and ditch, of foliage and crop.” There is no slickness here. Everyone of these 150 odd pages is at once authoritative, brief and fascinating. Let Mr. Beccles read it and, like me, take off his hat.

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THE LESSONS OF HISTORY

BY G. R. STIRLING TAYLOR

CASTLEREAGH, by Sir J. A. R. Marriott. *Methuen*. 15s.

THE smaller sort of historians concern themselves with the collecting of facts; and, if they be lucky, they add a few more to the collection. It is a most essential service in building the foundations of the science and art of history. But, after all, foundations are chiefly a work for strong navvies. The collecting of facts is the business of careful clerks, who have enough skill to transcribe documents and arrange lists of dates. That does not need genius, but merely conscientious attention. It is a suitable occupation for those who sit in university chairs, with a comfortable salary and a well-stocked library.

Sir John Marriott, by a long list of volumes, has proved that he is very careful about these foundations of his work; but his main object is much more creative than the humdrum job of putting in concrete on which to build. His business is to explain the design of the building which is being erected out of the facts which the studious clerks have brought together. The books which have come from the pen of this author, during the last few years especially, make it very clear that he (and not too many others, alas!) has grasped the very vital fact that the history of the past is most closely linked with the events of today. If we would know what is likely to happen tomorrow, then the surest way of getting the right answer is to find out what happened

a hundred years ago. The latest news is not always discovered in the stop press telegrams.

This present volume on Castlereagh is one more example of the fine historical buildings which Sir John Marriott is erecting as guides to public opinion. His story of how Lord Castlereagh conducted the Foreign Office in the two first decades of the nineteenth century, before and after the battle of Waterloo, is the most instructive way of getting to know how the affairs of Europe should have been handled after the battles of the Somme and the other tragedies of military art. The Treaty of Vienna, in 1815, if our diplomats and political amateurs had known a little history, would have been a guide and a warning to the men who went to France to sign the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. If the despatches and speeches of Castlereagh were published and repeated at Geneva today, they would cover most of the facts and vastly improve most of the decisions. It would be necessary to make a few trivial revisions, such as writing Germany as the name of the dangerous enemy, instead of the France which had been brought to its knees when Napoleon at last could find no more Frenchmen ready to die in order that an Italian adventurer should remain Emperor of the French.

It is positively astounding to realize that history repeats itself so closely. There are, of course, prim professors who tell us that this never happens.

Minds that can only grasp details naturally fail to see how little the essentials of history change. The substitution of the Emperor William of Germany for the Emperor Napoleon of France is necessarily a great convulsion for a timid thinker. Sir John Marriott has a bigger historical view; he thinks on a larger scale.

Castlereagh is still the key to a sane international policy for Great Britain. Of course there are many necessary changes of detail which will need infinite care on the part of our diplomats. But it must be with real and well-deserved patriotic pride that his fellow-countrymen can read today how rigidly Castlereagh (and Wellington, also) insisted that the main object of European statesmen should be to make and keep peace; while conquest, the enlargement of territory, was a small thing which must not stand in the way of the greater end. Castlereagh was the first to offer that Great Britain would restore almost all the French colonies; and he and Wellington were anxious to evacuate the conquered France at the earliest possible moment. They were there, they said, to give peace to unhappy Europe—not to retain conquests or exact punishments.

Perhaps that is Sir John Marriott's greatest gift; this very fine sense of social morality can rise above the smaller national and party squabbles. It is this wide conception of the historical scene which enables him to get the whole into such admirably true proportions.

One would like to have room to point to the many valuable details discussed in this book. For example, Castlereagh's position in the matter of a paper currency is very remarkable. If the British Treasury showed as much sign of wisdom today, thoughtful citizens would feel more confident than they do. Castlereagh said then what the most advanced economists are saying in 1936.

NEWS FROM TARTARY, by Peter Fleming. *Jonathan Cape*. 12s. 6d.

ONE is used to understatement from Mr. Fleming. Never does the old school tie wave more casually, with such a well-affected negligence. If he swam the Pacific and was swallowed by a whale he would assure us that the size of the Pacific had been exaggerated by romantic writers and that as for the whale's inside, it was merely a question of ignoring official information, etc., and of finding the obvious route no one else had thought of—just this and a little ordinary luck. The creature would probably respond to the Eton boating song. All this might be too irritating if Mr. Fleming were not an excellent writer and a very expert rough traveller. His latest journey from Peking to India, over the old Silk road, through the closed province of Sinkiang, with a plucky woman companion, was a remarkable one. It proved his theories about travelling light and living on the country; it confirmed his opinion that one can travel through country in a state of upheaval, with bandits and warring armies somewhere in it, without mishap; and that even a closed province like Sinkiang where the Russians are quietly penetrating and where strangers are roughly arrested and turned back, can be entered and crossed if you go quietly in over the mountains on a little used road and show a worthless passport to some official who dare not confess he cannot read. But two of his original companions—the party was four when it left Peking—were in fact turned back because they were white Russians.

One might expect a journey like this to provide a few exciting adventures, a hairbreadth escape or two, shooting in the passes, life and death struggles against storm and cold. Nothing of the kind happened. The worst mishap both travellers suffered was being thrown off their horses; and having their equip-

ment soaked in a river. They went hungry—but never seriously. The worst they had to put up with was long and arduous marches in grilling heat or withering wind; and, particularly in the early part of the journey, interminable and alarming delays while the puzzled authorities wondered whether to permit them to go on or not and finally let responsibility slide on to the shoulders of the next town on the route. And a seven months' journey over 3,500 miles, with a rook rifle, a tent, a frying-pan, and Macaulay's *History of England*, cost no more than £150.

It was eight years since a traveller had succeeded in passing through Chinese Turkistan. Mr. Fleming's route lay through gorges of the Boron Kol to which he was guided by a white Russian who dared not, however, enter the province. This was the most arduous part of the journey, for it lay across barren tableland and desert, 14,000 feet above sea level, very often without fuel for fires and with no pasturage for the animals who had to be dragged tottering up the passes. This was also the time when the travellers' lives were most "conjectural." Here some of their animals gave out and had to be given up. But at last they saw the first green trees for weeks and entered the oasis of Cherchen, were at once arrested by soldiers, asked for their papers and almost at once, quite, inexplicably, released.

The political chapters of the book disclose the fact that with Nanking too worried by its own affairs and too far away, Sinkiang has become in the delightful phrase, a Russian "sphere of influence." But the Russians are going slowly. They do not wish to upset the Japanese by annexation and there are few, if any, signs of "Sovietization." The important factor is the Tungan army—the Tungans are Moslems—who are still smarting under defeat by the Russians, and whose young and gifted

leader is at present an exceedingly well-treated hostage in Moscow. If Russia wants for any reason to raise a Moslem revolt in N.W. China, she has, Mr. Fleming points out, the best possible leader for it.

The people of the road are well observed. They had their little ways, and the important art of preventing a guide, or an official from losing face added to the charms of dealing with them. They appear to have been a kindly lot of people and in outlandish huts greeted the travellers with hospitality. But Mr. Fleming, while he can hit off a stray Mongol or Tungan or Turki in a fitting phrase, seems to have been more attached to his animals than to the human beings. He wept when one of the former gave out on the edge of Sinkiang. It is natural. Without his camels or his horses, he would have been done for; at one point, where an agricultural life had apparently destroyed the habitual courtesy and friendliness of the nomads, there was some doubt about being able to get camels at all and he might have been "condemned indefinitely to the tamarisk until a caravan should pick us up in the summer." But he got them, and one can read between the lines of this modest, brilliant and amusingly disparaging narrative, that Mr. Fleming is accomplished in the arts of dealing with refractory people and of throwing dust in the eyes of those whom a little authority makes dangerous. He seems to know when to be firm and when to give in. He also seems to drive his expedition at the dickens of a pace. Kinj, his companion, inevitably silent in these pages—though one gathers she is to write her own book—was a woman of extraordinary abilities, strength and courage. It will be amusing to read her version of the journey Mr. Fleming has "debunked."

V. S. PRITCHETT.

TSUSHIMA, by A. Novikoff-Priboy.
Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul.
Allen & Unwin. 16s.

ON the 14th of May, 1905, the rays of the rising sun struggled to penetrate a billowy mist which drifted across a confused and cheerless sea in the Straits of Tsushima. This gut of water separates the peninsula now known as Chosen, but spoken of as Korea in 1905, from the Japanese archipelago. Shipping making its way from the South into the Sea of Japan, in which is situated the Russian base of Vladivostock, must pass the Straits, and it was in these waters that on that mournful morning thirty years ago a Russian fleet under the command of Admiral Rozhdestvensky was annihilated by the Japanese battle-fleet led by Admiral Togo. The Russians had laboriously made their way from the Baltic round the Cape of Good Hope on a 15,000 mile voyage from St. Petersburg to Vladivostock. It had been an astounding cruise and it ended in complete disaster a few hundred miles from the longed-for destination.

The story of this historic event has been told by many writers and from many aspects—there is, for example, that notable book *Rasplata*—and another book on the subject can only be justified and recommended if it is of outstanding merit. Such a book is the one under review. The Russian author was a paymaster's steward on board the battleship *Oryol*, and in 1905 he was working for

the Russian revolution. Not the least interesting parts of a fascinating book are those sections in which his revolutionary aims are at odds with his nationalistic ardour. The book is remarkable for two things. First, its account of the incredible brutality which marked the relations between officers and men, and its revelation of the hopeless technical inefficiency of the Russian squadron, show up as under a searchlight the rottenness of the Tsarist regime. Such conditions are the breeding-ground of certain revolution. Secondly, in the latter part of the book, where the author has collected with the utmost care a comprehensive series of impressions and accounts from survivors of the battle, there may be read a story of an action at sea, as seen and endured by the individual, which for brilliance of writing will rank high in sea literature. I was myself a participant in the battle of Jutland and in a light cruiser which was heavily engaged. Reading these accounts of the horrors endured in turrets and conning-towers, in engine rooms and stokeholds, of the hell in sick bays where surgeons had to operate in a ship on the point of capsizing, was for me a flash back to the night of May 31st, 1916, of almost unbearable reality. If you want to know what a naval action is like, read this book; it has passages of terrible realism. Only the restraint with which Novikoff tells his story prevents the readers mind from being bludgeoned into insensibility.

Tsushima is packed with swiftly sketched impressions of Novikoff's shipmates, both officers and men, and from it one can learn a good deal of the Russian character. There is a moving account of the surrender of the remnants of the Russian fleet as the battered vessels lay helplessly ringed by the almost undamaged enemy. The surrender is described in the form of a carefully constructed reproduction of the discussions which took place between the

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officers concerned. There is the story of Captain Yung, dying as a prisoner in his own ship, and of the Japanese assisting the efforts made to conceal from him the fact that his vessel had fallen into the hands of the enemy.

Underlying the muddle, the inefficiency, the corruption, one of the consequences of which was the amazing Dogger Bank incident when this Russian squadron opened fire on the Hull fishing fleet and nearly caused a war with Great Britain, is ample evidence that given leadership the Russian sailors were endowed with a heroism second to none. Novikoff does not show in his book an adequate appreciation of the extraordinary nature of the fact which brought this heterogeneous collection of war-vessels from the Baltic to their doom in the Straits of Tsushima. The Russians had no bases; Great Britain was hostile; half the ships were always breaking down; they were loaded to the scuppers with deck cargoes of coal. Yet this squadron struggled 15,000 miles to go up and battle with a superior force operating within twenty-four hours of its home ports. How the devil they did it I have never been able to imagine, but it was done, and since I have read this book I am left with a profound conviction that the corrupt super-structure of Russia having been swept away, the next Russian fleet sailing under the Red flag will be a very different proposition from that which sank with 12,000 officers and men beneath the cross of St. Andrew. Up to the present the Soviet Government has concentrated on its army and air force. It is about to build a new Navy. Vladivostock is still Russian. The socialised bear has firmly established himself in the Far East and is gazing steadily into the Rising Sun, now nearer its zenith than it was in 1905. Tsushima may yet be re-fought, and, like Adowa, be avenged.

STEPHEN KING-HALL.

COLLECTED POEMS. By Austin Clarke. With an Introduction by Padraic Colum. *Allen & Unwin*. 7s. 6d.

MR. AUSTIN CLARKE, one of the few poets in the middle generation of Irish writers, has been quietly accumulating his reputation during the last twenty years. His work is not fashionable, because he has followed the highest ambition of the poet, which is to develop into an epic writer, with a mature objectiveness. Most poets today divert that ambition into novel writing, believing that is the only way to find a substantial audience. Mr. Clarke has written one or two strange novels, but they have been only an extension of his epic vein, with similar themes and similar treatment. He remains essentially a writer of verse, all his vitality given to the intricacies of his craft.

As a craftsman he is unique. I know of no other poet, not even an Irish poet, who is so un-English in his technique, and who has imported into English verse such successful adaptations of the poetry of another race and language. For here is a Gaelic genius, expressing itself with that almost chess-playing ingenuity of the old Irish tradition in verse-making, the work of a man who might have been to school with the bards, who spent twelve years in pupilage with their masters in prosody, the art offering a tradition and an orthodoxy as exacting as the disciplines and rituals of the Jesuit teaching. It is significant that Mr. Clarke was trained also by the Jesuits, his education beginning in the college where that of James Joyce began.

His poetry is therefore worth studying in detail. His rhythms are new, and his methods of accentuating them are new. At first, to the English ear especially, his verse reads rather flatly, just as the intricate oriental music written on a twenty-two note scale is elusive and almost dull to an ear trained on the rougher eight-note scale of European music. But accommodating one's

temper to his music brings surprising delights. Take his verse slowly, so that none of his accentual devices are missed, and then the odd fall of stress, the queer truncations and sudden closings of cadence, begin to assume a pattern and an emotional congruity with the meaning of the verse and the personality of the man. His elusiveness, disguised by a simplicity that one at first thinks is peasant-like but which later proves to be scholastic, develops in one's ear, discovering to the reader a subtle mind, desperately trained to the recording of agonies of spirit felt only by a man rebelling against an extreme sophistication and a cruel discipline. So delicately does he tread upon the fields of verbal sounds that we begin to understand the scale of his music, and can enjoy its tiny transitions, its half and quarter notes, its subtle playings with assonance. In this last he is an absolute master. In fact, he does with it almost more than English verse will stand, refining upon the device until his rhythm stresses by this means become little more than hints which are lost in the rigid measures of the English verse-line.

Searching deeper for the causes of this almost monastic technique, we see how this poet, perhaps by reason of his early training with the Jesuits, cannot wholly escape their influence and share the life-rhythms of the modern world and its materialistic society. He is still with the schoolmen, as Joyce is, and offers the amazing spectacle of a grammarian in a non-grammatical age, concerning himself with the problems of the Schoolmen of the Aristotelean Middle-ages. Naturally problems of sex, which to us moderns are no longer problems, loom large in his conflict, so large indeed that they become monstrous and terrifying, colouring his work with sombre distortions and despairs, as though he were an El Greco in verse, and emphasising his segregation from all his contemporaries.

RICHARD CHURCH.

EUTHANASIA, and Other Aspects of Life and Death, by Dr. Harry Roberts.
Constable. 7s. 6d.

THE question of Euthanasia is one that does not admit of a ready answer because it obviously involves the greater question of the value of life. Conceptions of life itself are so varied that when people discuss its value they hardly ever begin, and seldom conclude, by talking about the same thing. To one person it means biological existence, to another the condition of happiness, to a third the persistence of human consciousness, to a fourth the co-ordination of human faculty; and when four such people try to agree about the desirability of liberty to put an end to human life at will—if they come to agreement, they will not agree about the same thing. Life has a utility value: it also has an intrinsic value and (as Professor MacMurray has pointed out) these two values, which correspond to those of science and art, can only be synthesised in a religious view. In a religious view the intrinsic is dedicated to utility for a purpose beyond itself; and it is thus that we come to the ordinary religious idea of human life as a gift held in trust which cannot morally be disposed of by him to whom it is entrusted.

That seems admirable enough until we have watched a friend in mortal and incurable sickness praying for death's deliverance from continuous pain. Then we may well begin to wonder whether the actual fact that man has power over existence has use and meaning, and whether, together with the power, he never has a moral, humane and even religious right to exercise it. To liberal minds it is indeed a terribly vexed question, and in the first three essays of a liberal-minded book, Dr. Harry Roberts states the case simply and clearly from the standpoint of a medical man to whom it is an eminently practical question. His own view

appears to be that although modification of the existing law is desirable, the actual matter is so intimately bound up with personal relationship and personal responsibility that legal recognition of Euthanasia would not mean very much in practice. "The protection of the law" has a very doubtful meaning to a really conscientious doctor, and, being a true humanist, Dr. Roberts well understands the implications of personal responsibility.

The subject occupies only a small part of a book of brief but pregnant essays on such subjects as Love and Sex, Crime and Punishment, Mind and Reason, Sociology and Education. Dr. Roberts has the kind of mind associated—so often, alas, in dreams!—with one's best idea of the general practitioner: the informed, humane, experienced mind, practical in outlook, personal in reference and perceptive of much beside the symptoms of disease. Each one of these essays is highly readable because we are conscious of being in touch with a man who knows his highly-skilled job, and yet retains that avidity for life which prevents the channelling influence of a profession from narrowing his outlook.

Perhaps the best chapters in the book are those on Love and Sex. They show a continual awareness of the permanent values of human relationship side by side with a wide and generous tolerance for the vagaries of the modern newly-enfranchised young. It is those chapters which one instinctively hopes will come to the notice of the many to whom they would be of practical use; for criticism based on knowledge, experience and understanding is always kindly, and in the most kindly vein, Dr. Roberts has some trenchant things to say about fashionable views of love.

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FILMS AND THEATRE. By Allardyce Nicoll. *Harrap.* 7s. 6d.

PROFESSOR NICOLL'S book is not easy to read. His English is inclined to be inexact and his intentions sometimes cannot be disentangled from a curious jargon, in which technical terms are not always used correctly (the meaning of "montage" has escaped Professor Nicoll) and nouns as often as not are employed as adjectives. "Illusionistic," "linkage," "resultant audience reactions," such words and phrases do not suggest clear thought. But it would be a pity if readers were repelled by the style or by the rather elementary nature of Professor Nicoll's technical analysis, for he makes some valuable points.

Not the least valuable is his general attitude. "If you wish to be a dramatist you must be prepared to write for the established theatres of your day; and if you esteem the cinema and believe it to be an art you must be prepared to discover that art among the commercial films of Elstree and of Hollywood, calculated to appeal to the public at large." And again, speaking of the usual criticism that most films are "trivial in theme and often vulgar in expression," he writes: "Exactly in this way did Sidney speak a few years before Shakespeare entered the service of the Lord Chamberlain's players." That is well put. That the cinema is popular entertainment *ought* to encourage any artist who rejects the ivory tower, who wants his art to be part of the vulgar natural life—if only the parallel with the Elizabethan stage were more complete. But the audience has lost its vulgarity; it is refined and partly educated, and the artist will no longer be heartened by the direct applause, or criticised by the direct disapproval, of the common people. He will hear only the crackle of chocolate paper, the whispers of women with shopping baskets, the secret movements of courting couples.

Nevertheless Professor Nicoll's attitude remains essentially right. If there is to be an art of the cinema, it must be one which shakes the common people out of their indifference. Unfortunately Professor Nicoll's idea of good commercial films is: *The Private Life of Henry the Eighth, The House of Rothschild, David Copperfield, Man of Aran, The Barretts of Wimpole Street*. D. W. Griffith's work, even now, would be more to the point: these films show the "literary," the refined professorial bent, the "artistic" compromise. Indeed his examination of cinema method is rather as if Henry James had illustrated the craft of the novelist with quotations from Ouida: the tricks are good tricks, but in such contexts valueless. Nor does the examination go very deep. His first object is to defend the popular nature of the film, his second to describe its essential technique, but most of his analysis is so elementary that it would have been safe to assume that amount of knowledge among his readers before he began to write. He notes for example the dissolve, the cut, the fade-in and out, the wipe, but he makes no attempt to discuss their use, to show why the wipe is—almost invariably—a mistake, how the functions of the cut, the dissolve, the fade should be, but seldom are, distinguished.

Nevertheless he leads, by unsatisfactory stages, to a valuable conclusion, that, while the stage, with its living actors, should deal only with types, the film, by its very two-dimensional form, can deal far more adequately with characters.

When living person is set before living person—actor before spectator—a certain deliberate conventionalizing is demanded of the former if the aesthetic impression is not to be lost, whereas in the film, in which immediately a measure of distance is imposed between image and spectator, greater approaches to real forms may be permitted.

GRAHAM GREENE.

SIR RICHARD GRENVILLE, by G. H. Bushnell. *Harrap.* 10s. 6d.

THIS book has been long overdue. The absence of a life of Grenville was a most curious hiatus in Elizabethan biography. Partly, no doubt, it was due to the disinclination of most historical biographers to do any original work. In Grenville's case there was nothing to crib from; it involved the wearisome and lengthy task of wading through contemporary documents; of weighing contradictory evidence; of following up clues which, as often as not, turn out to lead nowhere. The average historical biographer, intent on "re-interpretations" and "psychology," dislikes this sort of thing, even when he is competent to do it. The genuine historian, on the other hand, becoming more and more ascetically scientific, is apt to despise so small a thing as one man's life. He is more interested in the economic causes of the sixteenth-century trade war with Spain than with the epic last fight of the *Revenge*. So, between the two, Grenville has been left alone.

There is, of course, Tennyson's poem, which has the value of being based, historically, on Raleigh's contemporary pamphlet and which has kept alive the truth of that last fight. It is not the least of the merits of Mr. Bushnell's study that, in his careful analysis of the end, he has endorsed the spirit of the ballad and contradicted the academic denigration which sees in Grenville only an insubordinate fanatic.

Grenville's career, however, is sufficiently varied. His services in Ireland, his work as High Sheriff of Cornwall, where he arrested the Jesuit proto-martyr, Cuthbert Mayne, his founding of the colony of Virginia (in which matter Mr. Bushnell has restored the correct proportions of his and Raleigh's responsibility), his part in the Armada fight, in which his name hardly figures since

his work was the less spectacular one of guarding the West, his life as a grand seigneur—these are the steps leading to the final climax. And each one is carefully, if sometimes too picturesquely, treated. Most of them, no less than the last, bristle with controversy. How far was Grenville's knighthood due to his capture of Mayne? What happened to the first American colonists? What was the relationship of Grenville to Drake, and was it true that he "would not serve under him" as it was reported?

There is still much work to be done before the whole story of Grenville can be written, for all the archives of the sixteenth and seventeenth century are by no means yet available. But at least a start has been made.

HUGH ROSS WILLIAMSON.

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THE SNARE OF THE FOWLER, by Gerald Bullett. *Dent*. 7s. 6d.

NOVELS, like oysters and Stilton, are out of season in August. The publishers wait for a month with an R in it. A good thing, too, or you and I—the whole world of novel writers, readers and reviewers—would be a good deal crazier than we are.

One even feels a mild gratitude towards the few books that struggle into print. They need not so emphatically be read, but there they are, like the evening paper on a Bank Holiday. I enjoyed each of the four novels listed above slightly more than I should have done say, in June.

M. Malraux's is much the shortest and much the best. It describes briefly and vividly the arrest of a Communist leader, Kassner, by the Nazis, his nine days' imprisonment, his release through mistaken identification, and return home. The style is swift, phantasmogoric, and conveys the sense of the horrifying unreality which in such an experience outweighs other emotions. Kassner expects to be tortured (will he give himself and his comrades away?), and as he waits in the darkness, listening to screams from another cell, or to the tap-tap of a prisoner the other side of the wall, the possibility of madness threatens him. A few bars whistled by the sentry produce an extraordinary explosion of music in his brain: he catches on to

that. Music—all the music he has ever known—is followed by a succession of sounds and images:

"Snow in Velsenkirchen, with a dog barking at a flock of wild ducks, whose cries were almost inaudible in the muffling whiteness; strike calls shouted through megaphones at the siren-blasts from the mines; sunflowers mowed down in the guerilla fighting, their yellow petals spattered with blood . . ."

We see a number of incidents from his life in cinematograph. When he gets his unexpected release, he must still escape from Germany into Czechoslovakia. Something of the same excitement and delirium overhangs the rest of the story: the aeroplane flight in darkness, the lights of Prague, a political meeting, the return to his wife and child. *Days of Contempt* should be read by everyone who likes excitement and dislikes Nazis, who is sensitive to current political dangers and suffering. It is not so good a novel as *La Condition Humaine*, although the author's personal feeling is more sharply directed. The effect of the book is slightly confused, and this confusion I feel—here as elsewhere in M. Malraux's work—is due not only to the subject but to the writing. Kassner is not quite an individual: true, his experience impersonalises him. Everything is just out of focus—as it is meant to be, M. Malraux might reply. The fact remains that only Communists will completely enjoy *Days of Contempt*, and to that extent it fails as a work of art.

Old Jan is the study of a Flemish peasant. Its virtues are mainly negative; it does not exaggerate, it does not brutalise or sentimentalise. Jan works

for a farmer and sleeps in the stable with the horses, to whom he talks more than to anyone else ; in the daytime he plods behind them up and down a field ; most of the day he thinks of nothing at all ; when anything happens to disturb him he goes off to the village to get drunk. This child-like figure is touchingly described ; though for the reader who wants to see this sort of thing done with masterly finality I recommend the later novels of Jules Renard. Old Jan (he is only 37 when the story starts) migrates a day's walk northward, manages to get married, fails to support a family of half-a-dozen children, and finally returns to work on the farm which he should never have left. Overlong, rather "novelised" towards the end, but with a genuine feeling for character and landscape. The translation of this book, by the way, as of *Days of Contempt*, has been admirably done.

Mr. Dennis Kincaid's *Their Ways Divide*, and Mr. Gerald Bullett's *The Snare of the Fowler* are both good fiction which—for me at any rate—never emerge from that category. They have not, that is to say, any compelling quality outside the story, the characters and the need for manœuvring them into one situation after another. Mr. Kincaid tells the story of an Indian and an Englishman, who meet for a moment as children in the nursery, whose lives run parallel in India and England and then join, until by an accident on the last page they become killer and victim in a local assassination. The characters, both Indian and Anglo-Indian, have been well observed in the tradition of *Passage to India*.

Mr. Bullett's novel is even more dramatic. By a series of coincidences a son unwittingly marries his mother, and this revelation is led up to by cunning hints and discoveries as in a detective story. The climax, however,

is neither tremendous nor horrible, but weakly blank, and when the son goes to the railway station and asks for a ticket "to Colonus" the effect is rather jaunty than impressive. Nevertheless, the book is well written, the people are sympathetic and individual, and almost any chapter of it is a pleasure to read. Its fault is not so much that it employs coincidence to produce a situation of extraordinary tension, but that it avoids the responsibilities of that tension. It ends at the point where it should seriously begin.

G. W. STONIER.

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OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Sir Arthur Willert has seen British foreign policy at close quarters for some twenty-five years. After being correspondent of *The Times* in Washington before and during the war, he was appointed in 1919 to take charge of the newly created Press Department at the Foreign Office. Last year he resigned, feeling he could do more useful work outside the official sphere. His book, *The Frontiers of England*, published last winter, was a well-balanced sketch of Europe in 1935—and incidentally the best statement to date of the case for collective security.

Lawrence A. Fernsworth is an experienced journalist who was formerly on the staff of the *New York Times* and other leading American newspapers. His wanderings took him to Spain six years ago, not long before the advent of the Republic, and he has watched successive waves of Spanish turbulence from the vantage-point of Barcelona. The vivid descriptions of the abortive revolt in Barcelona in October, 1934 appearing in *The Times* were from his pen, and he has been doing fine work in the past few weeks.

James Maxton is frequently described as the most popular figure in the House of Commons. All members pay tribute to his qualities of humanity and sincerity, which have earned him a permanent seat, so to speak, for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow. That he is capable of cogent Socialist argument to support his sentiment is shown by his book on *Lenin*, published in 1932, and the article he contributes this month on the human and psychological aspects of the new Unemployment Assistance regulations. As leader of the minute I.L.P. fraction, he has figured prominently in the last two parliaments.

Arthur Moore is the well-known editor of *The Statesman* of Calcutta. Formerly on the staff of *The Times*, he established his reputation before the war by articles on Mesopotamia, and has since specialized in the politics of the Middle East and India. The contribution we publish this month takes us back to the days of his admirable book on the Balkans' *Orient Express*.

Lord Elton, editor of the *News Letter*, the organ of the National Labour Party, has recently given a series of radio talks on "Public Opinion and Politics," and his observation of recent trends has only deepened the conviction that the English intellectuals of the Lib.-Lab. complexion have travelled miles away from the main body.

A. L. Rowse, a Fellow of All Soul's, Oxford, has been regarded for some years as one of the most promising recruits to the Labour Party. His book on "Politics and the Younger Generation," which appeared in 1931, expressed very well the standpoint of the younger men who in other times would have been Liberals.

Ray Strachey has been foremost in the crusade for the emancipation of women, first as a suffragette, and later as chairman of the Women's Service Bureau. She contributes a sober study of the role played by women in Parliament, having herself been a parliamentary candidate—standing as an Independent—on three occasions.

Thomas Burke is well known for his intimate knowledge of London, particularly the East End. But he has written charmingly on other subjects, and is now engaged on a book, *The Irish Vagabond Minstrel*, concerning Thomas Dermody.